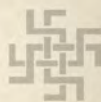




"BALZAC," BY RODIN

*E. Druet.*

The upper part of Rodin's statue of Balzac which caused a sensation in the Salon of 1898. This powerful rendering of the great novelist, loosely wrapped in his dressing-gown, shows the extreme limit of impressionism in sculpture.



From France itself came two men of exceptional merit. Emile-Antoine Bourdelle (1861-1929), though he did not achieve the profundity of his master (for he confessed the strong influence of Rodin), brought back to sculpture an element of formalism a little nearer the classic spirit. In his great "Heracles" outside the Luxembourg, or in the "The Centaur," the very subjects show where much of his inspiration and enthusiasm lay. One of his very finest works, however, "The Virgin of Alsace," a vast figure made to go on a hillside in Alsace as a war memorial, is quite different in spirit, allying the early French Gothic to certain formal qualities which one associates with such artists as the great Serbian sculptor, Meštrović.

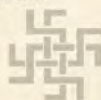
Aristide Maillol (1861- ) belongs more definitely to the modern movement in sculpture. Starting from discipleship to the later Rodin, he grew to think of his art much more in its creative self-containedness than simply as a means of representing Nature or presenting thought. Forms and masses—Rodin's "holes and lumps"—became the subject-matter of Maillol's art almost for their own sake. The human figure was used as a basis, but as a basis for formal design and not of pictorial representation. Details were simplified away; actual forms were distorted or changed to yield the effect in design which he desired. Sometimes, as in "The Young Runner," Maillol would get the utter simplicity and beauty which we associate with Greek sculpture. At others—some of his Bathing Women, for example—there is a wilful and therefore a challenging distortion. Always there is a calm and self-poise about his work which corrects the tendency to restlessness in that of Rodin. As Miss Bernadette Murphy says: "Maillol's work most clearly demonstrates the reaction of the generation of sculptors immediately following Rodin to that great master's work. For whereas the emphasis with Rodin was on the intellectual and emotional content of the conception, Maillol's chief concern has been with pure plastic beauty, the noble beauty of form. Yet he has never confined himself to this alone. His many lovely nudes, the draped and undraped female figures, seated, standing, kneeling, are expressive of emotion because the sculptor's aim has been to reveal the beauty of living form."

Rodin himself, in much of his later work, was moved by the same impulse, and in following this line taken by the master, Maillol has continued his tradition and has been an enormous influence on contemporary sculpture.

#### § 4

Meantime, some of the smaller European countries had produced sculptors of international importance and highly individual achievement.

Constantin Muenier (1831-1905) of Belgium used realism to express





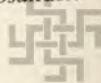
the industrial age and found his models and his subjects among the workers. Their movements as they laboured ; their clothes given significant form by the very nature of their work ; their features and hands, beautiful in their very ugliness and made dignified by toil : these things were his theme and subject. Less a pure artist than either Rodin or his disciples, Muenier said in bronze what Millet was saying in paint.

Another supreme sculptor belongs to Dalmatia. Ivan Meštrović was born in 1883. A child of peasants, he began his life as a shepherd boy, but soon he went to the little town of Spalato and there became a mason's assistant, working in the local marble from which ultimately he was to create his masterpieces. Meštrović was perhaps fortunate in that his environment gave him a theme, the theme of passionate nationalism, with its already created legends and subjects, its instant appeal to an audience, and its deep emotional content. For centuries Serbia had suffered under foreign rule, and when Meštrović was a lad the country, newly possessed of its independence, was keenly alive to its own past. Moreover, its geographical position, placing it between the classical traditions of Italy and Greece and the Byzantine East, gave to the young sculptor a confluence of artistic spirits of which he made full use. Born, too, in a country rich in marbles, Meštrović was as essentially a carver as Rodin was a modeller—that is to say, he cut back into the block of stone to create his forms instead of building them slowly up in clay and then having them cast in bronze. The effect was one of greater simplicity, less naturalism, more formalism and convention.

When in 1915, at a great exhibition at South Kensington, London first became actively aware of Meštrović, it was a new light upon sculpture. These legendary Serbian heroes, these weeping widows and immobile caryatid figures, the highly conventionalised lines of the hair and drapery, the stern classicism of the typically Serbian faces : all were new to us. In stone and in wood, in the round and in low relief, Meštrović's sculpture was a revelation. Often it was built on a series of definite planes, with the indications of form incised into these. Its archaic strength was matched by its intensely modern sense of decoration, and both by its originality—for Meštrović imitated nobody. His country's spectacular and tragic part in the 1914-18 War, gave an added link which endeared this highly nationalistic art to the western world of England, France, and America.

In 1920 he had a great opportunity when he was commissioned to build a mausoleum at Cavtat above Regusa on the Dalmatian coast for the old family of the Racić. The creation became a shrine of his art at its most splendid and typical, the formal angels bearing aloft the souls of the dead being triumphs of design and execution.

One other Dalmatian sculptor of high standing was Toma Rosandić.

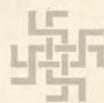




*Copyright.*

**"MOTHER AND CHILD (BRONZE)," BY IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ**

Using typical Serbian types, and giving his work strong emotional power, Meštrović brought something new to European sculpture.





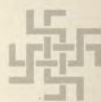


*Copyright.*

"ORPHEUS," BY CARL MILLES

Stockholm

Carl Milles's work has created a highly individual new Baroque. The forms are graceful and fanciful, the whole conception brought into unity by the play of the water.



He was an older man than Meštrović, but worked in much the same mood, often carving in wood.

## § 5

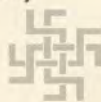
If the renaissance of sculpture produced these men in the Near East it also had its representatives in Northern Europe and in England. Greatest of the splendid band who hail from the Scandinavian countries is Carl Milles of Sweden. Milles's work has a high imaginative quality greater probably than that of any other living sculptor. There is a sense of enormous fertility in this pronouncedly personal style and choice of subject. Baroque? Perhaps, but with a difference, a grace of its own.

Although Milles now works in America, it is to Sweden one must go to see his work in its exuberance—statues, great fountains, architectural decorations. Stockholm is full of treasures from his hands, and near by at Lidingö is his lovely home—one of the most truly beautiful places in the world, with a terraced garden devoted to his sculpture. This exquisite place is to be given to his country at his death as a home of rest for artists. Meantime, lovers of his art have little difficulty in obtaining permission to visit it.

Some of Milles's finest work has been in connection with fountain schemes. In Sweden they seem to understand fountains, and Milles has created them in a number of towns. There is, for instance, the great fountain at Göthenburg in the centre of the Square flanked by the Concert Hall, the Theatre, and the Art Gallery. It is an amazing arrangement of sculptured groups synthesised, as Milles's fountains so rightly are, by the lines of the water thrown in living parabola from one to another, or quivering in great granite basins.

Early in his career the little town of Linköping, a place of only 25,000 inhabitants, adjudged Milles the winner in an open competition for a great fountain, and gave him the opportunity to carry out a noble scheme. The black granite basins and vast vases he surrounded with reliefs presenting the history and legends of the kings of Sweden, and over the centre he created the fine equestrian group of Folke Filbyter, the king whose son was stolen by the monks. This work is probably the noblest in Milles's early, comparatively simple style. Another work in this early manner is the enormous polychrome carved wooden statue of King Gustav Vasa in the National Museum at Stockholm. It is one of the greatest pieces of wood sculpture in the world, and Milles worked on it for eighteen years, from 1907 to 1925.

We associate him, however, rather with an almost feminine gracefulness and fancifulness in form and conception: The Apollo Fountain outside the Concert Hall in Stockholm; the Europa Fountain with its wonderfully





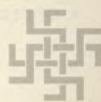


"THE VISITATION," BY JACOB EPSTEIN

Tate Gallery, London

*Copyright.*

Epstein is primarily a modeller and a romantic, and in this life-size bronze he conveys all the mystery and resignation of his great subject. There is invariably in his work something of the elemental.



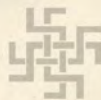


"PROSPERO AND ARIEL," BY ERIC GILL

*Copyright.*

Broadcasting House, London

Great simplification of the carved stonework gives to Eric Gill's sculpture an early Gothic note.  
He unites the beauty of mediæval sculpture with his own definite Modernity.





curved Tritons. Attenuated figures rise out of his stonelike flower forms ; lines radiate, catch at each other across space ; complicated form leads the eye through almost infinite convolutions. Whatever else may be said of the work of this Swedish sculptor it is highly individual and is already exercising an influence on European sculpture.

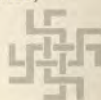
In something of a renaissance the Scandinavians have produced many modern sculptors, less individual than Milles, but nevertheless important. Sinding and Kai Nielsen of Denmark ; Väinö Aaltonen of Finland ; Vigeland of Norway ; Einer Jonsson of Iceland ; David Edstrom of Sweden : a few names stand out from the many who work nobly in stone or wood in these Northern countries with their highly cultured and sensitive peoples.

## § 6

Here in England sculpture during recent years has also had something of a real revival, with a high standard of fine talent producing conscientious if unspectacular work, and a few names of world renown and challenge. The Royal Society of British Sculptors has done much to keep the standard of the art high and to obtain recognition for it along orthodox academic lines. Because of the challenge of their work the names of Jacob Epstein and Eric Gill in particular demand attention.

Epstein has, indeed, almost suffered from too much publicity. He has a restless mind which, having freed itself from the strict limitations of naturalism, has sought in a dozen styles to express its ideas. Each new work has been greeted with an outburst of objections, accusations, and defence—almost all overstated in the heat of controversy. The Wilde Memorial in Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris with its decorative Byzantinism ; the Cubist “Venus” ; the Expressionist “Ecco Homo” ; the almost Egyptian figures of “Day” and “Night” on the Underground Building (where also are some interesting sculptures by other contemporary modern sculptors depicting the Four Winds) ; the Rodinesque modelled portrait busts and statues : in each of these Epstein explores a different vein. Often the result is brilliant, and it is invariably forceful—a fact which gives the lead to his studies of strong male personalities. Sometimes, inevitably, there is a sense of unsuccessful experiment. Fundamentally Epstein is a modeller rather than a carver. His strong personal temperament colours his work to an unusual degree, and may account for the vehemence of controversy which flares up with the exhibition of each new creation. “The Visitation” in the Tate Gallery remains one of the most all-round successes of Epstein’s sculpture.

One other British sculptor whose work had evoked a great deal of controversy is Eric Gill (1882–1942). Gill was a Roman Catholic, a



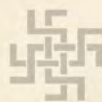


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**"SUSANNAH," BY FRANK DOBSON**

Tate Gallery, London

Bought as long ago as 1926 by the Contemporary Art Society and lent by them to the Tate Gallery for several years, this fine early work by Dobson was presented by the Society to the nation in May 1939. It is typical, in its massiveness and the simplification without distortion, of those sculptural qualities which make Dobson one of the leading British sculptors of the day.

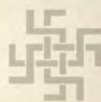




mediaevalist, a craftsman. He graduated into sculpture from his carving of lettering, and much of his notable work, such as the beautiful "Stations of the Cross" in Westminster Cathedral, still have a quality derived from this. Apart from his creative work as an artist he has written a great deal of exposition of what art is to him, and therefore what it should be in his view as a social activity. One of his most interesting works is the "Prospero and Ariel" on the B.B.C. building.

Apart from these men with international reputations this art of sculpture is being practised by a surprising number of good artists in this country working in the sound academic tradition and producing modelling and carving of fine craftsmanship. On the other hand, stand the rarer experimentalists, such as the ill-fated Gaudier-Brezska who after a start of great promise was killed in the 1914-18 War. Frank Dobson is another modernist of note, whose manipulation of natural form in the interests of design intrigues the non-naturalists. In England, however, a natural conservatism in art and a long tradition of craftsmanship tends to keep the art of sculpture within a decorative-realistic bound.

Germany contributes to the story of modern sculpture a very interesting figure in the person of the wood-carver, Barlach. His studies of peasants seem to be part of the wood from which they hardly emerge and yet they remain instinct with life. The outstanding sculptor in more normal vein is George Kolbe, a fine if not very daring exponent, whose "Dancer" is justly a favourite.



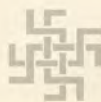
## THE MODERN DUTCH SCHOOL

THE ART OF JOSEF ISRAELS, ROELOFS, MAUVE, MESDAG,  
BLOMMERS, AND THE BROTHERS MARIS

## § 1

FOR more than a hundred years after the deaths of Hobbema and William van de Velde, Holland produced no painter of European importance. The Dutch School, which during the seventeenth century had risen, as we have seen, to the highest eminence, sank during the eighteenth century into trivial virtuosity. Pictures became conjuring feats rather than true works of art, for they evoked neither tender sentiments nor noble thoughts, but only excited wonder by their manual dexterity. In craftsmanship many of these paintings were remarkable in their meticulous detail, and while some painters—like Willem van Mieris (1662–1747), whose “Fish and Poultry Shop” is in the National Gallery—carried on the traditions left by Jan Steen and Gerard Dou, still more made a reputation among their contemporaries by their minute rendering of fruit and flowers. These they painted with the patient skill of a miniaturist, and they delighted in introducing into their pictures flies and other small insects whose tiny, but marvellously realistic forms, had to be discerned with the aid of a magnifying-glass. Among the artists who excelled in this style of painting may be mentioned the woman-painter of Amsterdam, Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750), and her contemporary, Jan van Huysum (1682–1749), both of whom are represented in the National Gallery. Here we may see how skilfully they both painted flowers, how cunningly the one introduces a butterfly, the other a snail ; but we soon weary of this pettifogging cleverness, which may amuse our eyes for a few moments, but can never touch our hearts.

It was not till towards the middle of the nineteenth century that any great revival of painting showed itself in Holland. One who helped to prepare the ground for the new generation was Johannes Bosboom (1817–91) who painted impressive pictures in oils and water-colours of the interiors of Dutch churches and cathedrals. He was influenced by the seventeenth-century painter Emanuel de Witte (1607–92), who had also painted these subjects not only with great accuracy of linear perspective but with broad effects of light-and-shade ; Bosboom painted these interiors still more





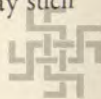
broadly and invested them with a dim atmosphere of grave grandeur and solemnity.

Bosboom always gives us a more or less generalised vision, and contrasted with the particularity of the painters who immediately preceded him, he may be said to have given a new direction to Dutch painting.

Another pioneer and forerunner of the modern movement was Willem Roelofs, who was born at Amsterdam in 1822, and went to France, where he made the acquaintance of Corot and other members of the Barbizon School. For some time Roelofs lived with these artists in the now famous village, and painted the forest of Fontainebleau in their company ; then he returned to the Netherlands, taking with him new ideals of landscape painting. Though he lived chiefly in Brussels, Roelofs had a considerable influence on Dutch painting. He was never an imitator of Corot, Daubigny, or Troyon, though he learnt something from all of them, as we may see in his picture "A Summer's Day," and it was through him that a knowledge and appreciation of their paintings first spread through Belgium and Holland. Roelofs helped to found at Brussels in 1868 the *Société Libre des Beaux Arts*, of which Corot, Daubigny, and Millet became honorary members, and to this exhibition both Dutch and Belgian artists contributed. It became the rallying-point of the younger generation and of those painters who were beginning to be affected by the Barbizon pictures which so many of them had seen in Paris. After living in Brussels for forty years Roelofs moved to The Hague, where he died in 1897.

## § 2

The debt of the modern Dutch painters to France cannot be ignored, but we must remember that Holland possessed in Rembrandt one of the greatest of the Old Masters, and though his influence seemed to slumber for two centuries in his own country, it was shortly to prove itself to be alive once more. The greatest figure in this school is Josef Israels, and his art must be regarded as a blending of the influence of Rembrandt with that of Jean François Millet, plus the remarkable personality of the painter himself. Israels was one of the earliest as well as one of the greatest of the modern Dutch painters. He was born on January 27, 1824, at Groningen, of Hebrew parents, his father being a money-changer and broker. As a boy his first ambition was to be a rabbi ; at an early age he studied Hebrew and buried himself in the Talmud, and he was well in his teens before he displayed a marked leaning towards art. Meanwhile his father intended Josef for a business career, but while working under his father as a stockbroker's clerk, Josef Israels surreptitiously obtained lessons in painting from local artists, and though their talent was but mediocre their pupil soon began to display such

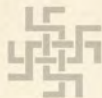




"A SUMMER'S DAY," BY WILLEM ROELOFS (1822-97)

*W. F. Mansell.*

One of the pioneers of the Modern Dutch School, Roelofs worked at Fontainebleau with the painters of Barbizon and introduced their ideals of landscape painting into the Netherlands. This picture is a fine example of his tender fidelity to Nature and of the radiant beauty of his lighting.



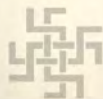


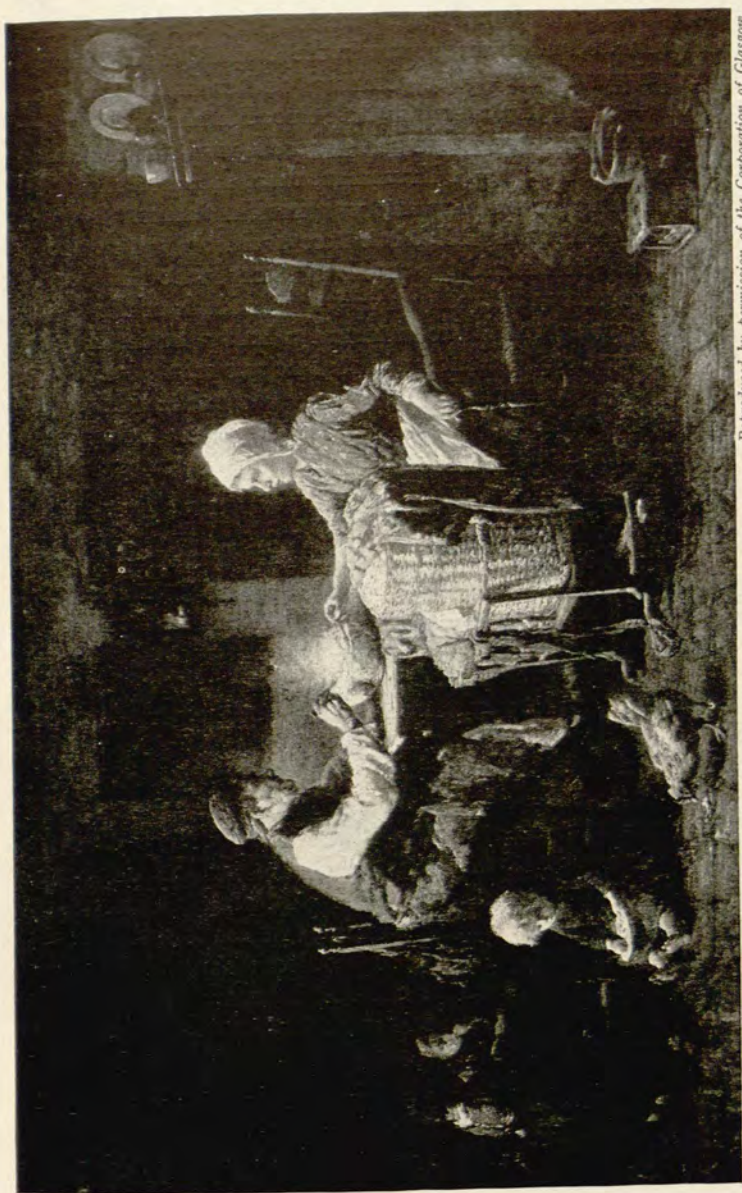


"A HAPPY FAMILY," BY JOSEF ISRAELS (1824-1911)

W. F. Mansell.

In this exquisitely lighted picture of the humble home of a Dutch fisherman, the painter gives us a touching study of domestic contentment and bids us ponder on the lives of people who can be happy with so little.





*Reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Glasgow.*

**"FRUGAL MEAL," BY JOSEF ISRAELS**  
Glasgow Art Gallery

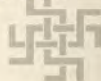
One of the greatest democratic painters of the nineteenth century, Israels interpreted the indoor home-life of the peasant as the Frenchman Millet recorded his labour in the fields. Making a stay in the little fishing village of Zantvoort, near Haarlem, Israels discovered the human drama and pathos of everyday life. In this characteristic picture he shows us "the treasure of the humble" and invests a homely repast with the solemnity and poignancy of a sacrament.



unmistakable gifts that parental opposition was overcome and he was allowed to go to Amsterdam to study art. He lodged with an orthodox Jewish family in the Ghetto, and all that he saw in the Jewish Quarter himself, combined with the religious paintings and etchings of Rembrandt based on the life in that quarter—which had altered so little since Rembrandt's time—made a profound impression on him, and had a more lasting influence than anything he learnt from his master, Jan Kruseman, who, though a successful portrait-painter of his time, was a dry and uninteresting artist. In 1845 Israels left Amsterdam to study in Paris, but here again he was not very fortunate in his master. He entered the studio of Picot, who had been a pupil of David, and so far from being in touch with the ideals of the "men of 1830," he was brought up to admire historical paintings in the classical style. When Israels returned to Amsterdam in 1848 he was chiefly influenced by the French historical painter Delaroche, and he began painting historical and dramatic subjects in which, beneath the French polish, the influence of Rembrandt was nevertheless discernible. But Israels had not yet found himself, and it was some years before he did. The critical period in the artistic career of Israels was about 1856. In 1855 he showed in the Paris Salon a historical picture, "The Prince of Orange for the first time opposing the Execution of the Orders of the King of Spain"; in 1857 his exhibits at the Paris Salon were "Children by the Sea" and "Evening on the Beach," two tender impressions of commonplace, everyday scenes on the coast near Katwijk. These last pictures are by the Israels we know; the picture of 1855 might have been by almost any historical painter of the period. How did this change come, and what brought it about?

It was life, not art nor any artist, that changed the whole spirit of Israels's painting. He had a serious illness while he was living at Amsterdam, and when convalescent went to Zantvoort, a little fishing village close to Haarlem, to recruit his health. He lodged there with a ship's carpenter, and living the life of these simple, kindly seafaring folk, Israels was struck by the drama, pathos, and tragedy in the common lot. At Zantvoort he made the same discovery that Millet had made at Barbizon, namely, that to a sympathetic and understanding spectator the common life of the people even in a remote, secluded village is as full of romance, thrills, and tragedy as the pages of any history book. Israels discovered that "the events of the present are capable of being painted and the sorrows of the poor are as deep as the tragical fate of ancient heroes." A new vein of artistic expression was now opened to him, and henceforward he painted the life of the poor and humble, and found in typical, everyday episodes motives for expressing with peculiar intensity his wide human sympathy.

It may be said, therefore, that the art of Josef Israels, though he received his training in Paris, was far more the fruit of his own experience of life than





*W. F. Mansell.*

**"ALONE IN THE WORLD," BY JOSEF ISRAELS**

"The sorrows of the poor are as deep as the tragical fate of ancient heroes." In this moving picture of a wife who has just lost her beloved husband, Israels expresses his deep feeling for the daily tragedy of life.

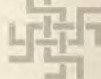


the outcome of French influence. We feel that even if Millet had never existed, Israels would not have painted otherwise than he did, and though the subject-matter of their respective pictures are akin, there are considerable differences between them. Millet painted his peasants out of doors in the light of the sun; Israels pictured his fisher-folk by preference indoors, in dim interiors. Hence his pictures are usually more subdued in colour than those of Millet. Israels painted low life in low tones and built up his visions of life, whether in oil-paintings, water-colours, or etchings—and he worked in all three mediums—by broad masses of light and shade. Further, his tendency is to be more tragic than Millet, and many of his pictures have not inaccurately been described as “piercing notes of woe.” One of his most famous pictures, “Alone in the World,” contains the essence of his art. In the treatment, in the rays of light illuminating the gloom which befits the subject, we see the influence of Rembrandt; while in the bowed figure of the lonely widow, with her open Bible by her side, we have a poignant expression of the artist’s deep feeling for the daily tragedy of life.

In 1870 Josef Israels left Amsterdam and moved to The Hague, where he lived till he died on August 12, 1911, respected, honoured, and world-famous. He was a painter who appealed equally to the general public and to connoisseurs, and though so many of his works are tragic, this never interfered with his popularity, because he pictured the tragedies of common life which all have experienced and all can understand. Further, if he reached his highest intensity of expression in rendering sorrow, suffering, endurance, and the pathos of old age, Israels was not wholly tragic in his art. Pictures like “A Frugal Meal” and “A Happy Family” show the reverse of the medal—the compensations of poverty and the happiness of the humble. But even in these scenes of domestic contentment there is something touching, and the philosophy of Israels seems to bid us to ponder on the life of people who can be happy with so little.

When Josef Israels was a young man, working as a clerk under his father, one of his frequent duties was to take a money-bag to the bank of a Mr. Mesdag. This banker had a son Hendrik Willem Mesdag, born at Groningen on February 25, 1831, who also became a famous painter. For many years Mesdag practised art as an amateur, and it was not till he had amassed a considerable fortune in business that he retired from banking and devoted himself entirely to painting. Thus Mesdag was not only in the independent position of being able to paint what he pleased without thinking of the taste of buyers, but he was also wealthy enough to help his brother artists whose works he admired.

In 1866, when he was thirty-five years of age, Mesdag went to Brussels, where his friend and relative, Alma-Tadema, was then residing. Roelofs also was living in Brussels, and it was under his guidance that the banker began

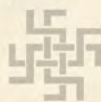




*W. F. Mansell.*

**"A SEASCAPE," BY H. W. MESDAG (1831-1915)**

Originally a banker by profession, Mesdag retired from business at the age of thirty-five and henceforward devoting himself to art he became the foremost marine painter in Holland. This picture is a fine example of his vigorous rendering of the life and movement of the waves and of his skill in placing shipping, so that his picture is at once absolutely natural and also decorative.



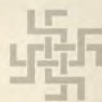




W. F. Mansell.

"ON THE BEACH," BY B. J. BLOMMERS (1845-1914)

A typical example of the happy art of this painter, displaying his love of children and his knowledge of sea and sky. A disciple of Israels, Blommers developed the lighter side of that master's art.

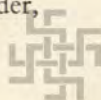


the serious studies which should fit him to make art henceforward his profession. Mesdag stayed three years at Brussels and returned in 1869 to The Hague, no longer an active man of business but an artist. He was not only a painter himself but a collector of paintings, and in course of time he formed a very important collection of modern pictures, chiefly of the Barbizon and Modern Dutch Schools, which in 1903 he generously presented to the public. The Mesdag Museum at The Hague is a lasting monument of his own taste and of the genius of his contemporaries. As a painter Mesdag gave himself almost exclusively to the painting of the sea, and his marines are remarkable for their luminosity, truth, and the vigour of their handling. "A Seascape" is a good example of his power of suggesting the life and movement of the waves and of his skill in placing shipping, so that his picture is at once absolutely natural and yet decorative in design.

The numerous painters of the Modern Dutch School—almost as numerous as the "Little Masters" of the seventeenth century—may broadly be divided into two classes, the figure or genre-painters for whom Israels was the chief influence, and the landscape painters who were inspired by Roelofs and the French painters of Barbizon. Among the genre-painters we may mention Albert Neuhuys, born at Utrecht in 1844, who approaches closely to Israels in his grave tender renderings of humble interiors; David Adolf Constant Artz (1837-90), who, in addition to interiors, painted the fisher-folk of Scheveningen out of doors, frequently at moments when they were resting on the sandhills; and Bernardus Johannes Blommers, born at The Hague in 1845, who developed in his own way the lighter side of the art of Israels. There is nothing tragic in the pictures of Blommers, whose favourite subjects are children playing on the sands at Scheveningen or paddling in the water. "On the Beach" is a typical example of the happy sea-side scenes in which the artist displays alike his love of children and his knowledge of sea and sky.

### § 3

Of the landscape painters of nineteenth-century Holland, the nearest to Corot—nearest in the delicacy of his colouring and in the lyrical note that rings out clearly in all his work—is Anton Mauve (1838-88). The son of a Baptist minister, Mauve was born at Naandam and brought up in a strict Protestant home, where art was not encouraged. It was much against the will of his parents that he eventually took up art, and he made little progress under his first master, Van Os, a dry academic painter whose stiff style had little attraction for his sensitive, rather dreamy pupil. The earliest paintings of Mauve were tightly drawn and highly finished, but later, after he had made the acquaintance of Israels, Willem Maris, and other artists in Amsterdam, he completely changed his style, his handling became looser and broader,

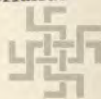




and he restricted his palette to delicate greys, greens, light fawns, and pale blues. When he was thirty he exhibited at the Free Society in Brussels, and he was influenced by the French artists who exhibited there, particularly by Corot and by Daubigny, whose works he saw in the house of Mesdag and other places in Holland. Mauve soon began to excel in landscape, rendering the soft hazy atmosphere that lingers over the meadows of Holland with infinite tenderness and poetic truth. The sand-dunes near Scheveningen were for many years his favourite sketching-ground, and it was there that he painted one of the most popular of his pictures, "The Sand Cart." It is a painting that captivates us at once by its winning simplicity, its entire truth, and the atmosphere of repose which it exhales; and this reposefulness is a general characteristic of the art of Mauve, though his subjects are usually taken from workaday life. We do not think of him primarily as an animal-painter, though his love of animals is made clear by the frequency with which he introduces them into his pictures. But Mauve's animals never seem to have been painted solely for their own sake; they are part and parcel of the landscape, in which they take a natural place, fulfilling their allotted function as aids to human activity. Each of Mauve's landscapes has the animals appropriate to it. He painted horses—for many years his "Watering Horses," belonging to Mr. J. C. J. Drucker, was lent to the National Gallery—but he also painted donkeys on the seashore, cows in meadows and on the road, sheep at pasture and in their pens. The fine collection of Mauve's work in the Mesdag Museum at The Hague contains examples of all these subjects. Towards the end of his life Mauve painted sheep more frequently than any other animals, the reason being that after living at Amsterdam and The Hague he settled at Laren, which is in the heart of the sheep country to the north-east of Amsterdam. Mauve took all rural and seashore life for his province: he painted fishermen and fishwives at a fish-auction on the beach, he painted groups of peasants gathered together at a timber sale, drawing the various types of faces with great insight and humour, but in all his pictures life is pleasant and work proceeds placidly in an atmosphere of peace and contentment.

## § 4

Three of the most famous and most interesting of the nineteenth-century Dutch painters were members of one family, all born at The Hague and the sons of a struggling printer. This printer, Maris by name, was of foreign extraction, being the son of a Bohemian soldier of fortune who left his native city of Prague, married a Dutch wife, and settled in the political capital of Holland. The printer also had some experience of fighting, for in 1830 he was called up as a conscript to fight on the side of the Netherlands

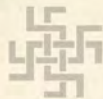




"THE SAND CART," BY ANTON MAUVE (1838-88)

W. F. Mansell.

This tender rendering of a typical incident in the workaday life of the seashore captivates us by its winning simplicity, its entire truth and its atmosphere of repose. Mauve was the most lyrical of the Dutch painters, and his pictures have a serene quality of placid contentment.

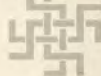


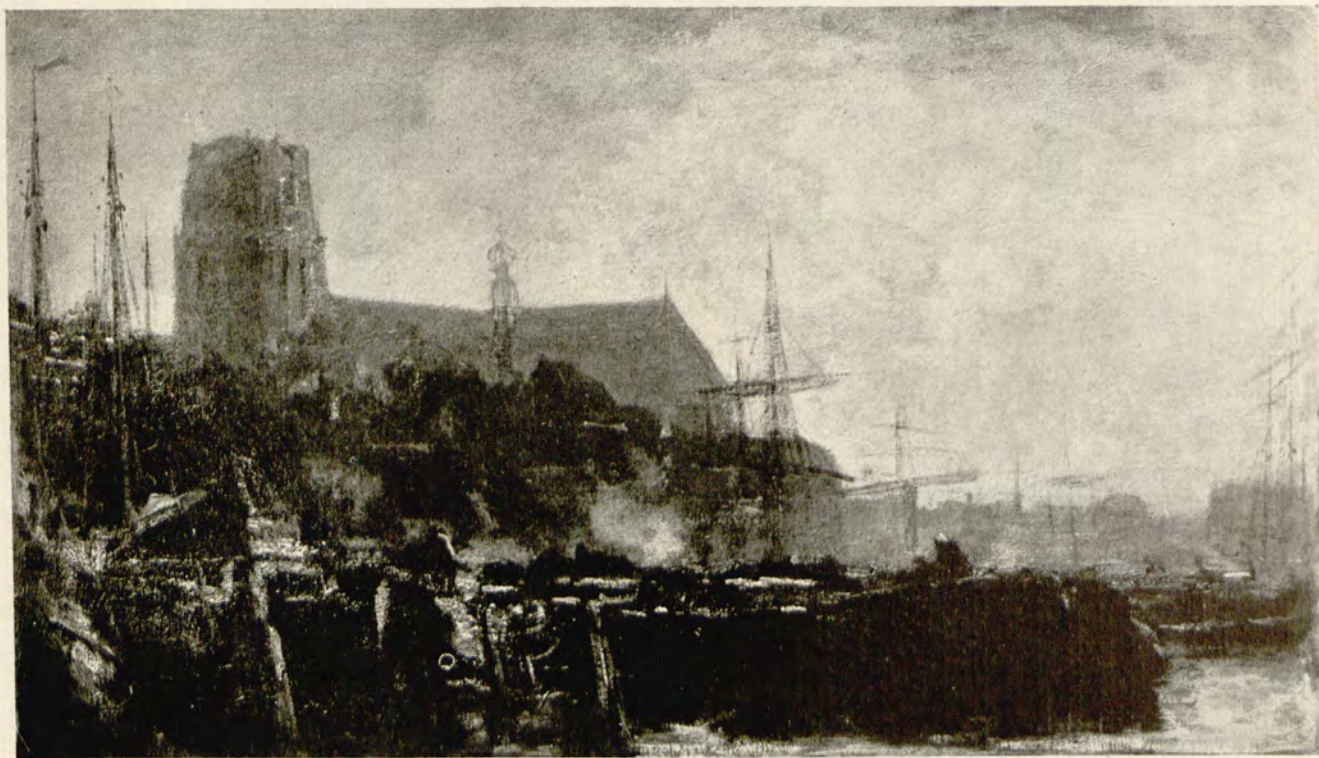


in the war which resulted in the independence of Belgium. After this war the printer returned to a life of unbroken toil, married, and had three sons. Of these the eldest was Jacob (or James) Maris, born in 1837, next came Matthys (or Matthew), born in 1839, while the youngest, Willem, was born in 1844. In speaking of these brothers we shall here use the English equivalents of their names by which they are usually known in Great Britain and the United States.

All three sons showed at an early age remarkable talents for drawing, and notwithstanding his poverty their father appears to have realised the wisdom of allowing each to follow his artistic bent. In their early years James and Matthew were closely associated. In 1855 the talent of the latter came to the notice of Queen Sophie of Holland, who made him an allowance, and the thrifty father considering that this allowance was enough for two, both James and Matthew were able to spend a year studying and painting at the Antwerp Academy. At Antwerp the two brothers lived in the same house as Alma-Tadema, and through him they got to know his relative Mesdag, the banker-painter, Josef Israels, and other Dutch artists. But in these early days neither brother was much affected by the art of his immediate contemporaries. They laboured strenuously to master the technicalities of their art, and James was guided in his first efforts by a master named Van Hove. This artist, though of mediocre ability, was a very conscientious draughtsman, and under his influence James Maris produced pictures remarkable for the minuteness of the details. One of his early pictures, "Interior of a Dutch House," painted when the artist was twenty-three, is in the Mesdag Museum, and is quite in the style of Pieter de Hooch. In the middle-distance, on the left, is a sunny nook; in the foreground is the figure of a servant-girl standing in the entrance hall, holding in her right hand a basket and in her left a pewter can. All these details are painted with scrupulous exactness, and the same characteristics may be found in other domestic scenes and interiors which he painted in these early years.

It was not till he was nearing thirty that James Maris changed his manner of painting and acquired the style which eventually brought him fame. In 1865 he went to Paris, where he remained for six years, and there, under the influence of the Barbizon masters, he gradually broadened his style, abandoning his former intimacy of detail and now aiming at a more general effect of grandeur. Henceforward he devoted himself almost exclusively to landscape, and though the change of his style was brought about by French painting, his mature work is akin to that of Ruysdael in the nobility and majesty of its outlook. We can hardly escape thinking of Ruysdael's "Mill" when we see "The Stone Mill" by James Maris in the Mesdag Museum; a picturesque stone mill, with an open gallery round it, makes a stately figure against a sky with white drifting clouds. In the foreground are sandhills, in





"DORDRECHT," BY JAMES MARIS (1837-99)

*W. F. Mansell.*

A majestic vision at eventide of the "Venice of the North," with its Groote Kerke, its wide canals, and its shipping. It is a fine example of the manner in which this artist, the eldest of the three brothers, subordinated details to the grandeur of the general effect.

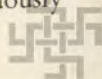


the distance the red roofs of a village, but though the accessories taken together make up a scene quite distinct from that shown in Ruysdael's famous picture, both pictures have a touch of sublimity in the dignity of their design. Equally characteristic of the way in which this artist subordinates particular objects to the general effect is his painting of "Dordrecht." All details are merged in these masses of light and shade, yet everyone who has seen this town at eventide will agree that the painter has given us the essential characteristics of the "Venice of the North," its Groote Kerke, its shipping, its wide canals, and the rolling grey sky overhead, and has presented these with incomparable dignity and grandeur.

William Maris is more limited in his range than either James or Matthew, and though in their early days the work of all three showed a certain similarity of style, William's work altered least in style and in subject. He is nearer to Roelofs than either of his brothers, and his favourite subjects were landscapes with cattle, which he painted, as a rule, in full daylight, so that his pictures are rather brighter and gayer in colour than those of his brothers. A meadow extending along the border of the sandhills, in which are seen a few stunted trees and some cows, a pond perhaps in the immediate foreground, and a cloudy sky overhead, this is a typical William Maris subject. Less poetic than Mauve, less grand than his brother James, and less romantic than his brother Matthew, William Maris was a happy realist whose rich-coloured pictures are full of sunshine and mirror the luxuriant greens of Holland's pasture-lands.

Matthew Maris stands apart from his brothers and from all the Dutch artists of his generation. He was different in his temperament, different in his life, and different in his art. Tracing it to his foreign extraction, to his Austrian, or, as we should now say, to his Czecho-Slovak blood, Professor Muther says there broke out in Matthew Maris a "Teutonic mediæval mysticism" from which his brothers were free. Matthew no doubt possessed a romantic mystical temperament, but it is possible that he was influenced by the romantic mediævalism of Rossetti. It was in England that Matthew Maris painted his most characteristic pictures, and in England, where he lived for forty-five years, he drifted apart from his brethren in his art as in his life.

The beginnings of Matthew were almost parallel with those of James. The two brothers studied, as we have seen, at The Hague and Antwerp, and they were together in Paris. One incident must be chronicled which appears to have had far more influence on Matthew than on James. In 1858 the two brothers were back from Antwerp at The Hague, and three years later, having made some money by copying pictures, the two set out together on a tour through the Black Forest to Switzerland, returning through France by Dijon to the Puy-de-Dôme. Matthew was tremendously





By courtesy of Barbizon House.

"ENFANT COUCHÉE," BY MATTHEW MARIS (1839-1917)

W. F. Mansell.

An example of "the delightful quality of faëry and enchantment which so strangely characterises some of the works of Matthew Maris." It has a quality "for ever young and simple as of the glorified vision of a child."





impressed by the romantic castles and buildings he saw in Central France ; to his poetic imagination they were enchanted palaces. The recollection of this tour never faded from his mind, and in pictures painted years afterwards we catch echoes of the turrets and battlements which remained fixed in his memory. We may see evidence of this in the background of "Feeding Chickens," painted in 1872.

Nevertheless it is important to note that there is not the same note of romanticism in pictures he painted only two years earlier. In 1868 Matthew joined his brother James in Paris, and we may see in the National Gallery a little picture he painted there in 1870. "Montmartre," as it is called, shows us dust-carts tipping rubbish on the side of a hill which has a windmill at the top. It is beautifully painted, perfect in its refined realism, but it is not romantic.

When the Franco-Prussian war broke out, James Maris returned to Holland. Matthew remained, went through the siege of Paris, and, like other residents, was enrolled in the Municipal Guard and called out for duty. His post was on the fortifications, opposite Asnières and just under Mont Valérien, and he suffered considerably from the bitter cold during night duty. Military life was not congenial to this gentle artist, and the thought of killing anybody was abhorrent to him. He confessed afterwards, "I never put a bullet in my gun, but only pretended to do so !"

His war experiences certainly did Matthew Maris no good ; they saddened him and tended to make him shrink into himself, so that he became more and more of a recluse. After the siege Matthew Maris came to London in 1872, and there he remained to the end of his days. He had rooms at first in the house of an art decorator named Daniel Cottier in St. James's Terrace, Regent's Park ; and Cottier, a strong active business man, had much influence over him, telling him what sort of pictures he ought to paint. Although Cottier, an admirer of Rossetti, undoubtedly encouraged the romantic element in the Dutch artist, Matthew Maris rebelled at painting under his direction and professed that he was thoroughly unhappy in his house. Yet between 1872 and 1875, when he was under the spell of Cottier, Matthew Maris painted what are generally considered to be his finest pictures. Among them we may mention "The Girl at the Well" and "Feeding Chickens," painted in 1872 ; "The Christening" and "Enfant Couchée," in 1873 ; "He is Coming"—a most Rossetti-like vision of a little princess at her spindle with a prince seen approaching through the open door—in 1874 ; and "The Sisters" in 1875. Yet even these works, full of indescribable poetry and romantic beauty, failed to satisfy the artist, who in after years would speak of them as "pot-boilers" which he had been compelled to paint by a tyrannical taskmaster.

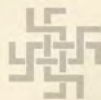
Though discontented and professedly unhappy, Matthew Maris was



*W. F. Mansell.*

**"FEEDING CHICKENS," BY MATTHEW MARIS**

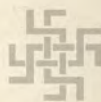
This picture, painted in 1872, shows how the artist could invest a commonplace incident of farm life with the magic of poetry. The "enchanted towers" in the background are probably a memory of the romantic castles and buildings in Central France which made a lasting impression on the artist when he saw them in 1861 while travelling from Dijon to the Puy-de-Dôme.





slow to leave what he regarded as a house of bondage, and it was not till 1887—and then chiefly because Mrs. Cottier was in ill-health—that he finally left. He went to 47 St. John's Wood Terrace, intending to remain there only a fortnight, while he looked around for a more convenient studio, and he stayed there nineteen years. In 1906 he found a home at 18 Westbourne Square, Paddington, in a half-flat with a small painting-room, and in this modest abode, tended by a faithful housekeeper, he remained till he died on August 17, 1917. He seldom went out and he had few visitors, the most intimate friends of his later years being the Dutch picture-dealer, Mr. E. J. Van Wisselingh and his wife, a Scottish lady, daughter of Mr. Craibe Angus, of Glasgow, who had been one of the earliest British patrons of Matthew Maris. His later paintings became more and more mysterious; instead of the clear outlines of his earlier pictures, forms were seen dimly as through a mist, and these pictures he would work over and over many times, each re-painting seeming to cast a new veil over faces and figures that became more and more spiritual. Had he wished, Matthew Maris might have had fortune as well as fame, for there were ardent collectors in many countries eager to secure examples of his works, but his means were straitened largely because he could with difficulty bring himself to part with a picture and desired to keep them all in his painting-room. In 1911 a Dutch admirer of his work, Mr. Thorsen, offered to the compatriot of whom he was proud a small pension. This the painter accepted, and the pension was continued till his death.

An abnormal being, Matthew Maris was "alone in the world" because he chose of his own accord to live the life of a hermit shut up with his dreams.



## OUR EYES TURN EASTWARD

THE ARTS OF CHINA, JAPAN, INDIA, AND THE BUDDHIST EAST

## § I

**D**URING all the thousands of years that this Western Art had been developing in Europe, another as rich, varied, and in some ways even more wonderful and exquisite had pursued its own course in the Far East. There had been little or no contact between the two. On rare occasions, such as when Alexander's Empire contacted Central Asia, or when the Mongols swept Westward in a tide of conquest, or when rare travellers such as Marco Polo, the enterprising Venetian, carried his ambition for trade to the East in the thirteenth century, there had been links ; and some sort of a legend of a civilisation away there beyond the farthest wanderings of European man had sprung up. Cathay : the word was a spell. China for her part deliberately chose to isolate herself over long periods, and the vast ranges of the mountains of Western Asia, the almost trackless Gobi desert, and the wide encircling seas ensured her isolation. As transport became more competent, and the lure of the riches of India and the spice islands took men Eastward, the legend of the beauty and civilisation of Cathay began to take shape as tangible fact. Slowly it was accepted, and ultimately Europe was stirred by the art and craft which came from this strange land.

It was during the eighteenth century that the decorative and applied arts of the West became fully aware of this exotic beauty, and a new wave of æsthetic idea, of *Chinoiserie*, brought fresh motives to fabrics and wall papers and ceramics. Great vases whereon dragons and phoenixes were interwoven with arabesques of flowers were brought back from the East by the rich nabobs and their agents who were making fortunes in India and the East Indies. Carpets of exquisitely cool blues and delicate pinks came to the floors of the Salons of France and England. Quaintly carved furniture in rich ebony, or stools and cabinets of fretted lacquer-work, found themselves in strange company in the drawing-rooms of the great. Some of our finest furniture designers were influenced to modify the severity of the prevailing classic, by shaping wood into faint echoes of this Eastern work. A pagoda—most amusingly Chinese of all forms—eventually

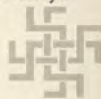




found itself, an object of surprise and wonder, in the Royal Gardens at Kew. During the nineteenth century, when taste everywhere had degenerated under the influence of the *nouveau riche* of the Industrial Revolution, this initial fascination of connoisseurs became a spate of mere acquisition. Birmingham imitated in brass what China had conceived in jade; and the Chinese themselves, forced out of their isolation by the enthusiasm of missionaries and the enterprise of trade backed by gunboats, responded to the demand by producing Chinoiserie in shiploads. The vases were larger, more tortured in shape, more set about by ever more fantastic dragons; the lacquer was fiercer in colour; the furniture more deliberately contorted; the ornaments more dreadfully ornamental. So Chinese art came to Europe at its most debased, and so it was accepted when it was least worthy.

Little did we dream in those days that the crest of this wave of beauty had passed a thousand years before. Little did we realise that during the whole of the period wherein our own art had been building up from the ruins of the Dark Ages this of the East had been degenerating. Two periods of three hundred years each—the *Ming* and the *Ch'ing*—stood between our enthusiasm for Chinoiserie and the days when, as Marco Polo records, Kubla Khan ruled over cities which were dreams of loveliness. And, if we would reach the golden age of Chinese art, we must go further back still, past the *Yuan*, that century of Mongol domination, to the period of the *Sung* which stretches backwards in time from 1279 to 960; and beyond again to the *Tang* which takes us back to the year 618. Those were the days of poets and painters and sculptors; of the builders of temples and palaces of exquisite grace and beauty; of embroiderers of banners like moving flames; of painters of dainty scroll pictures on silk, revealing a civilisation of the utmost suavity and an understanding of nature Wordsworthian in its mysticism; of the creators of ornaments of jade, of vases and bowls which have never found an equal in their subtlety and grace.

In those days Chinese culture was already incredibly old, and, in contradistinction to that of the West, it was unbroken. The period of the great civilisations of Egypt and Mesopotamia stretched from 3000 B.C. or beyond it. But whereas Egypt, Ur, Nineveh, Babylon, Crete, Greece, Rome, Italy, passed each in its turn, the dynasties of China formed a practically continuous culture, even through war and civil war and foreign invasion. Twenty-three centuries B.C. China had a Golden Age. The dynasties went by: the *Hsia*, the *Shang-yin*, the *Chou*, the *Ch'in*. During the sixth century B.C. came two great thinkers: Confucius, the sage, the teacher of ordered morality; and Lao-Tsze, the mystic philosopher of Nature. Confucius (551-478 B.C.) collected and edited the already ancient writings of China and from them evolved an ethical doctrine of honesty,

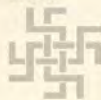




decorum and good manners based on the right relationship and dignity of individuals in the family and the state. His nine books, the five *Shus* and the four *Kings*, are the classics containing his teaching. Lao-Tsze, on the other hand, preached a mystic Pantheism, urging men to tread the *Tao*, the Way of tranquillity and gentleness, and to get back into unity with universal being through the contemplation of Nature and the acceptance of her way. His was a doctrine of inaction, of receptivity. He was the librarian of a Prince of the *Chou* dynasty, but retired to a hermitage and wrote his *Canon of Reason and Virtue*, the sacred book which embodies his teaching. Art in China is so closely allied with the philosophies of these two great teachers and with that of Gautama Buddha that we have to bear in mind their teachings if we would rightly appreciate it.

The great *Han* dynasty followed. It stretched from 206 B.C. to A.D. 219, and it was in the middle of this period that Buddhism spread from India and linked itself with Taoist ideas. China in *Han* times was sending her caravans along the great Silk Road towards the West, and so had communications with India and Persia. The link with her neighbours brought Buddhist Art as a lovely gift to China. Four hundred years of internecine war followed the *Han* dynasty owing to the disintegration of the separate parts of China into individual states; but there was nevertheless a deep-seated civilisation. Buddhism rose to its height, and despite the unsettled conditions a delicate art flourished. Out of it emerged the *Tang* dynasty (618 to 906), and China enjoyed one of her greatest periods of political quietude and prosperity. Her borders extended to the shores of the Caspian Sea and touched India. Taoism was the official religion, and Buddhism modified it, whilst Confucian ethics and orderliness kept life gracious and sure. Buddhism, so closely akin to Taoism in its ideals of quietude, simplicity, and universal kindness and toleration, gradually swamped the older faith into which it seeped. Exquisite temples and shrines arose, with some of the noblest sculpture the world has ever seen, with frescoed walls and paintings of Buddhistic story and of the saints of the religion on silk and precious manuscripts. This gracious civilisation continued for yet another three hundred years of the *Sung* period (960-1279). The æsthetic emphasis gradually moved from sculpture to painting, an art closely allied to the magnificent literature which marked the time.

In 1212 Ghengis Khan and his Mongol warriors swept over the Great Wall which was to have protected China from the North, and it seemed for a moment that this precious civilisation was to be destroyed. But China, vast and wonderfully established on its deep foundations of ancient culture, absorbed her conquerors. Her own symbol of man, created from the wisdom of the *Tao*, was the bamboo which bent but did not break. The *Yuan* dynasty lasted for a century, and in that short time





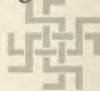
these fierce Mongol war lords had become more Chinese than the Chinese themselves. There were new motives in the paintings : the horses which the Mongols loved, portraits of the overlords and of the priests. There were palaces and temples set graciously amid the water-gardens.

“ In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure dome decree.”

Coleridge saw these cities in his dreams, as Marco Polo saw them in the reality of their incredible beauty. Travellers to-day can still imagine the loveliness, though more than six centuries have passed since they were built, though war and fire and revolution have passed over them during the troubled times of China's decline. During the following periods of the *Ming* (1368-1644) and the *Ching* (1644-1911) Confucianism gained ascendancy over Buddhism, and the old Taoist religion declined almost absolutely. Culture, under the influence of the Confucian doctrine with its worship of the traditions and its belief in stabilisation, tended to imitate the past, or if it changed at all moved towards an over-elaboration and an over-ornamentation which compares badly with the perfection and harmony of the earlier periods. Now, after the years of the great revolution which in 1912 overthrew the last dynastic house and established the republic, after seven years of the terrible devastation of modern warfare with a foe as ruthless as Ghengis Khan, but armed with weapons of modern destructive power, after contacts with the vulgarisation of the West and the proletarian culture of Soviet Russia, we may well fear for the continuity of the Chinese spirit which has persisted for five thousand years. But it may be that China will again conquer by the might of her spirit, and that something specifically Chinese will arise out of her ruin and sorrow.

## § 2

No people in the history of mankind more closely associated art with their social life and philosophy than the Chinese. We must, therefore, approach the paintings, the sculpture, even the applied arts, the early bronzes, the ornaments of jade, the ceramics, in an entirely different spirit from that with which we consider Western art and craft. In the first place there is a conscious underlying symbolism in everything, based on the fundamental Chinese view of the universe. In the second we must see the painting as an evolution of that art of calligraphy which is one of the most treasured in this Eastern culture. Unless we are viewing Chinese art with the Chinese eye we are debasing it to an art of surfaces such as we cultivate in our material Western world, and thereby missing its meaning. A landscape of mountain and lake with the mist ascending ; a

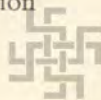


thicket of bamboo in which a tiger lurks ; a river running between giant rocks : these things have their own hidden language based on Taoistic philosophy and on a conception which has held sway in China since thousands of years before even Lao-Tsze incorporated it in the *Tao*.

That conception was of two balancing principles which by their interaction held the balance and created the life of things : the *Yang* and the *Yin*. The one was associated with the heavens, the other with earth ; the one with masculine, the other with feminine. That was the basis. All things grouped around these fundamentals. Water, cloud, mist belong to the heaven principle ; rocks, trees, and all such to the earthly. Moreover, the movement of water, descending as rain, flowing as rivers, or ascending as mist, came to symbolise the interpenetration of earth with the life of heaven. Thus, when an artist draws what to our Western eyes is merely a delicate representation of craggy pine-clad mountain peaks rising to the sky, with a waterfall rushing down between the rocks, a soft mist over the lake below, a foreground of swaying bamboos, he is not only depicting the beauty of his beloved landscape with a touch as sensitive as that of a bow on a violin, but he is speaking of the unity and arrangement of the universe with Man in its midst.

Somewhere in all this, very small in scale, you may find Man : a hermit listening to the distant bells of the temple, a little group of pleasure-seekers on a terrace looking at the evening star, a solitary fisherman. Humanity is a tiny integral part of Nature in this Taoist Chinese art ; it does not sprawl across the whole conception of the universe as it does in Western art of practically any period. Each Chinese picture is a mood. It is akin to quiet music in its gentle stirring of the spirit ; it aims at uniting Man and Nature through contemplation. Wordsworth among our poets came near to its spirit, and even he had a tendency to spoil its effects by the interpolation of the insistent human ego.

The other thing we must realise in approaching Chinese painting is the method, the technique arising out of the most ancient art of calligraphy and still being basically concerned with line-drawing in ink on silk. There are no shadows as in Western art. Indeed, when the Jesuits in the seventeenth century showed to the Chinese European portrait-paintings with shadows on the faces, the naïve Orientals enquired whether it was our custom to wash only one side of the face ! Nor is there the perspective from only one point of view which our painting achieved under the science of the Renaissance. The shapes of the pictures are different also, for the silk is mounted on rollers either at top and bottom or at either side ; and in certain landscapes, such as that magnificent one, "The Thousand Miles of the Yellow River," which was one of the many glories of the Chinese Art Exhibition at Burlington House in 1936, we are meant to unroll it section



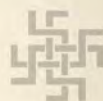




"Topical" Press Agency.

# LANDSCAPE BY WANG MENG, YUAN DYNASTY

Every Chinese landscape is full of symbolism which adds up to a balance between the heavenly and the earthly principles : cloud and water ; rocks and stones. The celestial water, as lake, ascending mist, cloud and returning waterfall, interpenetrates the material earth. Somewhere the tiny habitations and figures of man take their subordinate place in the design.



by section and read its beauty from end to end as one reads a book. To the Chinese connoisseur every stroke of the brush can be appreciated for its sensitiveness, and not least the brush-work of the writing which may be found somewhere on the design expressing in the words of some tiny poem the mood and meaning of the subject.

The symbols, the characters of the language carry us back into the mists of pre-history. Early bronzes are already decorated with elaborate pattern, often an ornament something like the Greek meander, which to the Chinese was and is the symbol for thunder and cloud, and thereby bespeaks the heaven principle. Strange shapes of jade (itself a symbolic material, for it is regarded as the product of both earth and water and therefore the unity of heaven and earth, of *Yang* and *Yin*) also embodied symbols of the dual principle; and ceramics—creation of the earth clay and the heaven water and fire—were at once beautiful in themselves, and full of significance in shape and ornamentation. We find these things in the earliest tombs of prehistoric times. They were used in the ceremonial doubtless as emblems of specific powers and offices, in that search for the perfect adjustment between *Yang* and *Yin* which lies behind all Chinese thought and art.

In the twenty-eighth century B.C. the Emperor Fu Hsi is credited with having reduced these all-important principles to a few significant symbols which were the beginning of Chinese writing. The *Yang* became represented by a long stroke —, the *Yin* by two short ones --. Out of this came eight further picture symbols:

heaven	— — —	earth	— — —
	— — —		— — —
	— — —		— — —
water	— — —	fire	— — —
	— — —		— — —
	— — —		— — —
river	— — —	wind	— — —
	— — —		— — —
	— — —		— — —
mountain	— — —	thunder	— — —
	— — —		— — —

These symbols rapidly extended to a vast vocabulary of picture-writing, and this calligraphy was cultivated as a supreme art. The brush and the medium of ink on silk constituted the method; and Chinese painting evolved from this and still retains its quality.



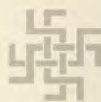


In the first century A.D. we have evidence of painting on silk and paper, and the tradition is unbroken. We possess delightful paintings of this type dated as early as the fourth century A.D. In the British Museum is a horizontal scroll painting, "The Admonitions of the Instructress," ascribed to one of the noted artists of the period, Ku K'ai-Chih, whereon the dainty figures depict the canons of good behaviour and conduct. Also in the British Museum is a later copy of another work by this master, a fairy-tale subject of a poet who loved a river nymph but—alas for the frailty of the love of poets!—not sufficiently to share her watery existence, so the lady swept out of his unchivalrous existence on a chariot drawn by six dragons. This type of fantasy is typical of one important side of Chinese painting and literature.

During the period preceding the *Tang* dynasty six canons of good painting were drawn up and accepted, and it is interesting that the first and most important of these is that which is called "rhythmic vitality," a quality which aims at expressing life in the very lines of the composition and the manner of the brush-strokes. There seems little doubt that the *Tang* period itself was really the golden age of Chinese painting. It was, indeed, one of the great periods of Chinese life. The silk routes to the West brought her into close touch with the Buddhists of India, the Zoroastrians of Persia, and even with the various doctrinaires of Christianity in the Near East. Buddhism especially had enormous power. As it decayed in India the more earnest of its priests and monks moved into China, bringing with them the Hindu and the Hellenist-Hindu forms of art. Sculpture rose to magnificent heights, and in painting Buddhistic art yielded a magnificent harvest.

Sir Aurel Stein in 1908 opened up a series of rock shrines at Tun-huang on the Turkestan border, and disclosed thousands of manuscripts and paintings as well as carvings of Buddhist sacred figures. "The Cave of the Thousand Buddhas" it was called by the excavators; and, as the treasures from it in the British Museum confess, it was indeed a revelation of the fineness of this painting even in a remote province of the country. From the monumental picture of Buddha preaching, to the hundreds of smaller works, scenes in paradise, Bodhisattvas (those beings whose compassion for erring humanity cause them to forgo their right to the bliss of Nirvana in order that they may return to help here on earth), priests, learned Lohans: these paintings give us some idea of the riches of this period.

Of the frescoes we have only tradition. One great master, Wu Tao-Tzu, is said to have painted no less than three hundred on the walls of temples. At this time such artists as Wang-Wei started that so-called Southern School of gracious landscape which came to its maturity in *Sung* times. There





Copyright.

"ADMONITIONS OF THE INSTRUCTRESS," BY KU K'AI-CHIH

British Museum

One of the earliest extant paintings of the world, this drawing in ink with washes of colour on a scroll of brown silk, belongs to the 4th century A.D. Its delicacy and exquisite draughtsmanship are typical of Chinese painting in every great period.

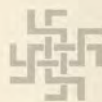




"Topical" Press Agency.

# "THE FISHERMAN," BY MA YUAN, SUNG DYNASTY

The mood of complete peace is upon this picture. The bamboo is always symbolic of man. This picture bears the stamps of the succeeding owners, and another characteristic of Chinese painting—a tiny poem.

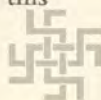


were wonderful animal painters, too ; more especially painters of horses, for the Chinese loved horses. Another vein which was explored was that which we have already noted in the "Admonitions of the Instructress," the gentle depicting of the activities of women. "Preparing Silk," "Listening to Music in a Garden" : how gracious it all is, how civilised ! We have to remind ourselves that these paintings of delicately clad girls engaged in these highly æsthetic occupations were made about two hundred years at least before the Norman Conquest of England, a period when Europe was still immersed in the internecine struggles for the barest existence at the end of the Dark Ages.

If we have lost many of the treasures of the *Tang* period, we have been more fortunate with those of *Sung* times. The landscape art, those "mountain and water" pictures as the Chinese call them, rose to absolute perfection in the hands of two masters especially : Kuo Hsi and Hsia Kuei. The son of the former has left on record how his father prepared himself spiritually for his painting, sitting at a bright window and allowing the calm of Nature to flow in upon him until he felt impelled to create out of the treasure of his well-stocked and sensitive mind. Kuo Hsi himself has written his philosophy, and records that the love of landscape is granted only to him who wishes to free himself from care and routine and to find among the hills and streams that which is refreshing. The landscape must be viewed from a distance so that the mind is free to wander in its noble vistas, and also that one may realise the unity of form amid its vast diversity. So this painter-philosopher sat at his window, burned incense to either side, washed his hands, took the finest brush and ink, and "let the thoughts settle in his soul" before he commenced work.

Hsia Kuei, perhaps the greatest of all the *Sung* masters, gave us the magnificent study of "The Thousand Miles of the Yellow River," tracing the stream from its source, the waterfalls among the rocks, until it merges with the broad flood of the open sea. Only Chinese Art could encompass such a conception, and when we were privileged to see it at Burlington House we realised that here was the absolute grandeur of landscape with which no landscape-painting in the Western world could compare.

Along with the name of this artist stands that of Ma Yuan, the master of pine trees and solitary crags. But he can also convey his mood of unity with Nature by showing a single fisherman sitting in his boat among the reeds. Often he painted tiny album pictures, but their size did not prevent him from expressing in them a vast conception of Nature. Not the least fascination of these Chinese pictures of Nature is the use made of the mist to obliterate detail and create great rest spaces from which the eye returns refreshed to the intricate details of crag and tree and bamboo. All this



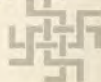


*Sung* art has a quality of pure feeling which no other landscape art in the world has ever achieved.

When it turns to purely Buddhist subject—the portrayal of learned Lohans or of Bodhisattvas—the emotion is the same : a calm which has found the repose at the heart of things. There is a splendid study of three Bodhisattvas in the British Museum which is a supreme example of the religious work of the period. At other times the art concentrates on one tiny aspect of Nature—a bird on a bough, a group of reeds, a single flower, three fish moving through water, a tiger, two geese. Always we feel that there is an understanding of essentials. One of the most famous pieces, a little album picture of a bird on a spray, which is in the Eumorphopoulos collection, is a masterpiece in its miniature way.

With the overthrow of the dynasty by the Mongol invasion it seemed that all this gracious life, quietist philosophy, and poised culture might have been lost. But the Chinese have always conquered their conquerors, and soon these fiery Mongols were accepting absolutely the beauty and culture of the people they had defeated. There were new motives, particularly that of the horses which these Northern warriors loved and which the Chinese could depict so vitally. Portraiture, too, came to the fore, for these Mongol lords were proud builders of empires who did not share the Chinese humility. Even the sacred art turned to the depicting of the priests and dignitaries of the Zen Buddhist and Taoist faiths by such artists as Yen Hui. But still the lovely landscape art persists in the hands of Ni Tsan and other great masters of the time.

Had we not the challenge of these wonderful early periods we might rightly feel that the painting of the period of the *Ming* dynasty, which roughly coincided with the great centuries of Italian painting, was marvellous indeed. There are exquisite things belonging to it, as one must realise in face of such a work as the "Wild Geese by a Mountain Stream," by Lin Liang, which is in the British Museum, or the quite delightful "Fairy with a Phoenix" which is in the same collection. In every important gallery all over the world beautiful works from this time may be found ; and if this art loses some of the inner feeling, it yet retains the command of the medium, the sweep of the brush-stroke, the simplicity, the power of suggesting vast spaces, which had characterised Chinese art of the greater early centuries. But gradually the external conquers. In the *Ming* period, that last three hundred years before the revolution of 1911, Chinese art succumbed to the temptation of marvellous repetition. Most of the old spirit had gone, leaving a surface art of elegant decoration. Silk paintings of this later time, as we have seen, came to be accepted in Europe as representative of the wonderful culture from which the soul had almost departed centuries before. Now we are better able to compare the later with the



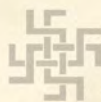


*W. F. Mansell.*

"TWO GEESE," BY A CHINESE ARTIST OF THE SUNG PERIOD (950-1250)

British Museum, London

The most simple subjects opened the door of Nature to the sensitive Chinese masters  
with a beauty both symbolic and objective.



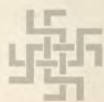




MARBLE—SEATED BUDDHA

*Oscar Raphael.*

Buddhism, introduced into China in the fifteenth century brought her a new beauty and symbolism much in accord with her own spirit of quietude. The highly decorative qualities of Eastern Art found a new purpose.

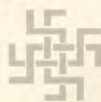


earlier work, we have adjusted our values, and we look back another thousand years for the crest of that wave in whose shallows we so long disported, thinking them to be the ocean of Chinese art.

## § 3

From China we turn to the arts of Japan, so closely related to, and, indeed, derived from those of the mainland. Painting and sculpture were introduced to the islands some time during the fifth century under the spreading of Buddhism; and although there have been periods when Japan has closed her doors to all outside influences, the Chinese power has invariably returned bringing fresh inspiration. Against this has to be set the distinctive characteristics of the Japanese people which inevitably have become expressed in their arts. They are, they always have been, more virile than the Chinese, less contemplative, more given to action. In many respects they seem more concerned with the immediacies of life here and now, and even though their art began with the other-worldiness of Buddhism it developed into realism again and again as though drawn by some invisible magnet. From one time of revolution we have a series of battle pictures and scenes of violence unequalled in the world; at another more recent period arose the democratic Ukiyo type of painting and woodcut, the genre "pictures of the passing world" making no claim to religious content or idealism but devoted to depicting the life of the common people. It was this latter school which came to marvellous fruition in the cheap woodcuts and colour-prints, perhaps the most brilliant contribution of Japan to the art of the world; the woodcuts which, discovered by chance in a shop in Paris by the early Impressionists, had so remarkable an influence on modern French and Western art.

The earliest Japanese painting and sculpture is the Buddhist work centred round the ancient capital of Nara. There in a temple we have the vast bronze figure of the Buddha, fifty-three feet high; there we have the paintings of the Ajanta type which tell of the roots of this art in distant India. At this early stage the influence, however, is distinctly Chinese and Korean, and it was only when the capital was moved in 794 to Kyoto that Japan began to have her own characteristic art. Those were the days of the magnificent court of the Fujiwara clan with its great culture. The Shingon sect of Buddhists, founded by the priest-artist, Kobo Daishi, made the practice of painting a sacred calling, and although under the patronage of the highly sophisticated court art swung over to secular themes, the temple paintings of the period yield some of the finest examples of early mediæval Buddhist art. At the end of the Fujiwara period, however, we have the school of the Tosa painters depicting the decadent



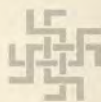


life of that court, where even the men used cosmetics and cultivated effeminate elegancies which ultimately led to its downfall.

The most outstanding name of the period is that of Kosé-no-Kanaoka, painter of the lovely study of the "Nachi Waterfall" with its exquisite blending of colour and that genius for stylised form which the Japanese had inherited from China. In these years the distinctive forms of the *makimono* (the long horizontal scroll) and the *kakimono* (the vertical hanging scroll) established themselves firmly as the conventional shapes for Japanese paintings. Under Buddhistic influence, with its acceptance of the sacredness and unity of all life, the artists made perfect studies of the minutiae of Nature, of frogs and grasshoppers, of single reeds and blossoms, of birds and leaves and sprays, with a reverence for Nature which had yet to wait hundreds of years before it was manifested in Europe.

In the British Museum we have the splendid examples of the "Ascending and Descending Buddha," painted by the Shingon priest, Yeshin Sodzu, whose date was 942 to 1017. One other curious aspect of Fujiwara art came at the extreme end of the period in that of the priest, Toba Sojo, who humorously depicted his fellow priests and worshippers under the guise of monkeys and geese and frogs—a form of satire which we find occasionally in the manuscripts from the monasteries of mediæval Europe, and evidently a world-wide ecclesiastical joke. A famous work of his in more serious vein is the "Shigazan makimono," depicting a series of miracles as its ostensible subject, but valuable for its lively portrayal of the contemporary life. In such work we have the beginning of the "pictures of the passing world" which were later to become Japan's most characteristic contribution to Eastern art.

With the overthrow of the noble Fujiwara clan this gracious art of court and cloister yields to the vivid depiction of the incidents of the civil war which caused their downfall. The painter Mitsunaga and his fellow artists give us terrible pictures which stand among the greatest battle studies of the world: the burning of palaces, the flight of the terrified court, the clash of armed horsemen, the swirl and terror of fleeing crowds. Into these long horizontal scrolls, so eminently suited in shape to the delineation of such subjects, the masters put a liveliness far removed from anything that had ever been attempted in the East. Sumiyoshi Keion has left us three of these twelfth-century masterpieces; and his successor, Kosé Korehisa, carries even further this war realism. One other master of the period demands mention: Nobuzane (1177-1265) carried on the work of the earlier court painters, and shows us the new court with a wider freedom and less conventionality, and with daring colour harmonies that are dreams of beauty. His masterpiece is the portrait of Kobo Daishi, the founder of the Shingon sect, as a boy saint.



When in the middle of the thirteenth century the Mongols swept down upon China and destroyed the *Sung* dynasty, it seemed for a time that their tide of conquest must extend Eastward to the islands of Japan, but the great armada which was to take them across the narrow gulf was devastated by storm, and Japanese independence continued. At first the effect was one of encouraging Japanese insularity, but later the flood of cultured refugees who had fled before the terrors of Ghenghis Khan caused a revival of Chinese influence. This Ashikaga period of Japanese art, extending from 1335 to 1573, is thus a reflection of *Sung* painting and sculpture.

Its early master was the monk, Cho Densu (1351-1427), greatest of all Japanese Buddhist masters, and imbued with a deeply religious spirit which recalls to us that of his Italian contemporary, Fra Angelico. One outstanding development of the school was that of quiet monochrome painting. Again it was a heritage from China, for its inaugurator was the Chinese priest, Josetsu, and its greatest exponent his pupil, Shiubun, whose landscape study in the British Museum is a splendid example of this monochrome work. The whole Ashikaga period was one of deep and restrained culture in which all the most characteristic arts and crafts of Japan, her poetry, her music, her unique flower arrangement, her formalised gardening, her calligraphy, and the delicate crafts such as those of the carved and jewelled sword-hilts, rose to their climax at the court of Yoshimasa. Here worked that most versatile and fastidious of Japanese aesthetes and artists, Noami, whose painting of a tiger is in the British Museum along with some of his landscapes and other work.

Sesshiu (1420-1506) is, however, the most considerable artist of this period. The Chinese influence in his work is predominant, but in landscape and figure subjects alike he used the swift calligraphic brush-stroke as no other master could. He also is well represented in the British Museum collection, not the least fascinating of his works being the "Hotei and Children," painted in his old age just before his death.

Towards the end of this great period of Japanese art came the famous Kano school of painters who received the official recognition which had hitherto belonged to the old court artists of the Tosa school. Motonobu (1476-1559) was its real founder, although he had been trained by his father, Kano Masanobu. His picture of "Shoriken crossing the Sea on his Sword" which we have in the British Museum, is a powerful example of his figure studies, but he was also a master of landscape, of birds and flowers, and he excelled alike in the old brilliantly coloured style and in the new method of monochrome. For seven or more generations the brilliant work of the Kano school went on from father to son and then it continued practically to our own day in the hands of brilliant disciples.

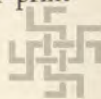


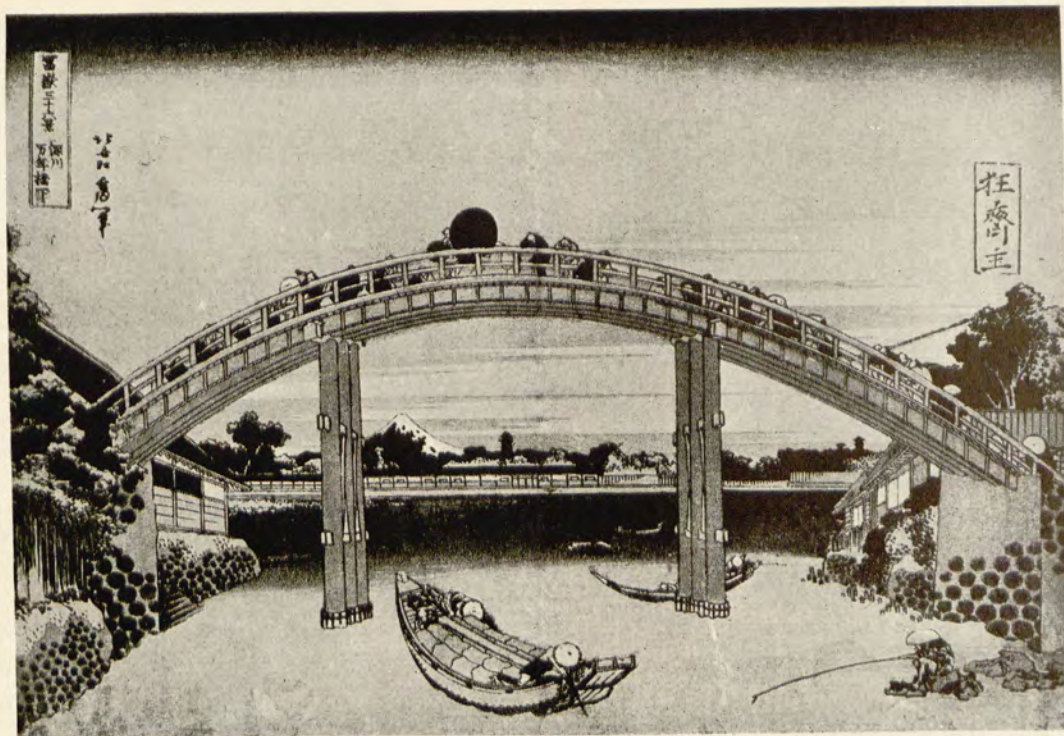


The seventeenth century brought a great change to Japan with the accession to the all-powerful Shogunate (the headship of government of which the semi-divine Mikado is only the nominal chief) of Iyeyasu, who pursued a policy of isolating his country from foreign influences and cultivating her inner resources. Under this policy the arts and crafts of Japan rose to exquisite loveliness, especially the art of lacquer and that of ceramics. To this Tokugawa period belongs the artist whose work has deservedly found such favour in Western eyes, Korin (1655-1716). Most famous as a painter and designer of screens, his lovely creations on backgrounds of gold and silver are among the treasures of this time. His conventionalising of form is brilliantly daring—witness the formalism of waves and rocks in the noble “Wave Screen” in the British Museum. Everything he touched was marked by this magnificent creative power.

It was, however, another direction taken by seventeenth-century Japanese art which was destined to have the most remarkable results. A school of popular painters arose, the Ukiyo school, which deliberately planned to cater for the ordinary people. The word means “pictures of the passing world,” and the subjects were to be those of contemporary life rather than the idealisations of religious art or the now highly formalised art of landscape or Nature. Morunobu (1625-94), created the vogue, although an earlier man, Matabei, is credited with founding the school. In the hands of Morunobu, however, the grace and charm of ordinary life shown in an idyllic fashion caught the popular taste. He took the step of having the more popular of his paintings translated into woodcuts. At first these were confined to the main design being cut and printed in black, the colour being added by hand by the artist; but they laid the foundation for the whole process of colour-printing, since with later artists each colour was made the subject of a single block which could be overprinted upon the basic design. By this means many prints could be taken from each set of blocks, so that the cost of these Japanese colour-prints came within the reach of everybody who wished to possess the work of the fine artists who created them. Theme and price, therefore, were definitely popular; and the men who took up this new form of pictorial art were themselves largely recruited from the artizan classes and catered for their tastes. One of the liveliest and most popular of themes was that of the theatre—a subject which would never have been permitted in the older conservative art, but which the common people loved. Actors in character and theatre scenes, therefore, became one of the most acceptable and regular subjects of these colour-prints.

Harunobu (1718-70) brought the art to perfection, adding a number of colours, devoting himself to delightful studies from daily life rather than to the theatre prints, and giving us the complete Japanese colour-print



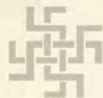


W. F. Mansell.

“RIVER SCENE WITH BRIDGE AND FUJIYAMA IN THE DISTANCE,” COLOUR PRINT BY HOKUSAI  
(1760–1849)

British Museum, London

An impressive example of the naturalistic and decorative powers of the greatest of the democratic artists of Japan. We have only to compare it with “Old Battersea Bridge” to learn how Whistler was influenced by the design of Hokusai.







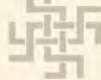
"JEHEI AND MISS KOHARU," BY UTAMARO

This colour-print, in black, pale-blue, Indian red and grey with a touch of yellow on the candle-stick, is typical of the feminine grace, delicate drawing and fine design of Utamaro's work.

as we know it to-day. Alongside him stands Utamaro (1753-1806), depicter of beautiful women in designs dominated by the most lovely rhythms of curves. Then, towards the end of the eighteenth century, came that great master of the school, Hokusai (1760-1849), "the old man mad with painting" as he termed himself, and one of the most brilliant of all Japanese artists. He and Hiroshige (1797-1858) turned again to the art of landscape, but of landscape seen through the new convention of the colour-block and not through the traditional one of the reed brush. Hokusai is perhaps most famous for his brilliant series, the Thirty-six Views of Fuji. They are now part of the artistic heritage of the world, a revelation of the beauty of the sacred mountain in aspect after aspect of her loveliness expressed in the wonderful simplicity of this subtle art. Most famous of all his prints in another vein is "The Wave," that brilliant study of laden boats between moving walls of water. It emphasises yet another characteristic of these later masters of the colour-print: their genius for getting into the tiny space of their woodcut a sense of vastness which brings to us the immensity of Nature. It was the discovery of some of this series of designs which so greatly intrigued the French Impressionists when one of their number found them in a tiny shop in the Latin Quarter of Paris, or—according to a more romantic legend—discovered the first of them through the happy accident of being served with a piece of cheese wrapped in one of these popular Japanese prints. But for Hokusai's method of doing whole series of studies of one subject, Monet would not have conceived the idea of the famous Rouen Cathedral series, the Waterlilies, or his other manifold versions of individual subjects, under different aspects of light. Hokusai, who was draughtsman, poet, journalist, and *bon viveur*, issued a kind of art journal, *Mangwa*, which contained many of the delightful and tremendously vital sketches wherein the whole life of Japan of his day breathes for us.

If the Impressionists owed a debt to Hokusai, Whistler found much of the inspiration for his work in the beauty of the woodblock prints of the other nineteenth-century master, Hiroshige, who delighted in the simplicity and subtlety of evening scenes.

Their work was a brilliant finale to this school which had lasted for a hundred and fifty years—a brilliant end, indeed, to this whole story of Japanese art before the influences of the West submerged it. There came a day when American gunboats shelled Japan to force her to open her doors to the trade and the culture of the Western world. At first reluctantly, and then with all the virility and acquisitiveness of her people, she obeyed; and mechanism, materialism, and the curse and temptation of power politics flooded over her age-old traditions. Perhaps the day may return when Japan again finds her own real life in the charm of the Tea Ceremony and the quietism of her native art. Or perhaps she is now for ever lost in the





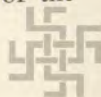
cosmopolitanism of the contemporary world, and her art must remain as museum pieces telling of a fairy-tale past and a beauty that is gone from the earth.

## § 4

India, so rich in literature and individual in architecture, yields fewer treasures of painting and sculpture. Much of the early work may have perished, for her climate, hot and moist as it is, has none of the preservative qualities of Egypt and Mesopotamia. That its civilisation is as old recent excavations in the Indus valley testify. Great cities are being unearthed there, coeval with Ur and the centres of civilisation in ancient Sumeria, cities with wide streets town-planned on a definite rectangular method, with two-storied houses complete with bath-rooms and a drainage system, with well-made brick-built wells and every evidence of a communal life planned by some central authority. But so far these homes of bronze-age culture have yielded no treasures of art, unless we except the seals and amulets engraved with animal forms often, or the terra-cotta figurines which tell of the elaborate jewellery worn by the women. Much has yet to be learned, however, of this civilisation. We have not yet deciphered the script, so there is no external literary evidence; no temples seem to be among the ruins, no fortifications in all the six or seven city sites so far unearthed. That they lasted for many centuries is revealed by the fact that at the chief of them, Mohenjo-Daro, no less than six city levels have so far been discovered. Strangely the record, such as it is, breaks both at the beginning and the end, for there is no first link with primitive village settlements and this whole civilisation of the Indus valley ultimately disappeared, leaving no trace.

Art in India, therefore, practically begins with Buddhist work, although this echoes the woodcarving of the worship of the gods and goddesses of the Hindu cosmogony. Indeed, it is essential to remember how closely related Buddhism is to the old religion which it came to reform, that religion partly brought into India by the invading Aryans from the North and partly evolved by the native Dravidians whose doctrines of karma and of reincarnations and whose practice of Yoga were all made part of the new faith when Gautama, in the fifth century B.C., preached his doctrine of purification.

It was during the third century B.C., however, in the reign of that enlightened king, Asoka, that Buddhism was firmly established, and in the enormous wave of temple-building and shrine-making of those wonderful days. Something like the passion for religion and its expression which swept over France under Saint Louis and left us the beauty of the Gothic cathedrals belongs to this period of the missionary king of the

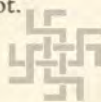


Buddhistic East. He stabilised the faith and its doctrines. He caused to be erected great pillars at various holy sites carved with inscriptions of the now orthodox doctrines. More than this he established the rock-hewn cave temples and the great *stupas*—the grave-mound shrines—at places where the relics of Gautama were reputed to be. Each of these had as its centre the traditional dome-shaped edifice, symbol of the lotus of heaven, and around it a four-square processional path approached by great decorated gateways and stone railings. Alongside the processional path as it climbed the mount would be low-relief panels carved to tell the story and legends of the faith.

Thus came the first stone sculpture, for contact during the previous century with Hellenistic tradition and the Western world through the invasion of Asia by Alexander the Great had taught the Hindus the value and durability of stone as a building material in place of their own method of wooden structure. It did not break down the forms which obviously belong to wood and woodcarving, and these decorative-pictorial panels, these great gateways, and the various symbols of the Buddha with which the shrines are enriched were all conceived in a wood tradition even when the medium was stone. The Eastern gateway of the stupa at Sanchi in Bhopal, with its elaborate carvings both in low relief and in the round, may be studied from the cast in South Kensington Museum. Not the least fascinating of these sculptures are the delightful figures of the tree-spirits with which it is adorned. How elaborate these stupas could become may be deduced from the fact that one of them, built at Amaravati, had nearly seventeen thousand square feet of low relief carvings. This magnificent work was unhappily almost destroyed by fire during last century, but precious fragments remain in the British and other Museums.

In those first shrines and in the great temples excavated and carved from the solid rock which were part of the stupendous early Buddhistic architecture there was no representation of Buddha himself, and it was in the districts most in touch with the Hellenistic tradition that during the first century A.D. a school of sculpture arose which began to create images of the Buddha. The traditional attitude of contemplation prescribed for the Yogi became the most widely accepted. This attitude had been poetically described in the *Bhagavad-Gita* :

“ Abiding alone in a secret place, without craving and without possession, he shall take his seat upon a firm seat, neither over-high nor over-low, and with the workings of the mind and the senses held in check, with body, head, neck maintained in perfect equipoise, looking not round about him, so let him meditate and thereby reach the peace of the abyss : and the likeness of one such, who knows the boundless joy that lies beyond the senses and is grasped by intuition, and who swerves not from truth, is that of a lamp in a windless place which flickereth not.”



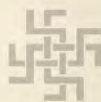




*By courtesy of H.E.H. the Nizam's Government.*

### WALL PAINTING FROM THE CAVES AT AJANTA

One of the greatest series of frescoes in the world, the paintings at Ajanta, Hyderabad, stand in Buddhist Art as those at Assisi do to Christian. The Indian work belongs to the Gupta period (A.D. 320-530).

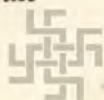


Such an ideal of static repose was an inspiring motif for sculpture, and from it came the marvellous Buddha figures of the Eastern world. One of the noblest and most massive of these early Buddhas is the giant one at Anuradhapura in Ceylon which belongs to the second century.

Once the way had been opened, however, to the representation of the great teacher, the cult of statuary inevitably spread. Many incidents, many traditions of his life offered themselves. During the Gupta period, which extended from A.D. 320 to 530, this Buddhistic sculpture became more experimental and elaborate. Groups of figures, haloed saints, studies of the Buddha as King or as Bodhisattva, individual figures framed with low relief panels : the inspiration never waned, until Buddhism itself lost something of its hold upon India and found its home farther East.

Meantime, India tended to revert to the gods of earlier Hinduism, and it was upon these that the later Hindu artists were able to expend the fecundity of their imagination in form. The vast literature of legend contained in the Vedic hymns composed by priest-poets as early as 1500 B.C. and written between 800 and 500 B.C. contained thrilling conceptions of the gods and their attributes derived from the earliest animism and Nature worship and partly refined in the spiritual imagination of this great people. Siva, Vishna, and Brahma were the three leading deities in whose activities the whole processes of the universe became symbolised, and in all of whom aspects of terror as well as of benevolence were accepted. The Hindu mind, not so literal nor anthropomorphic as that of the West, conceived these deities in forms which to our eyes have a certain monstrosity. Siva has many limbs ; her son Ganesha has an elephant's head to signify world-wisdom ; Sakti as the dark consort of Siva had any form of terror. All the terrible fecundity of a jungle country became expressed in the sculptured forms of these Nature gods and goddesses in a conception of the interwovenness of life which twisted darkly between the animal and the human. It is only by seeing Indian sculpture and painting of the last few hundred years from this native viewpoint that the Westerner can free himself from an obsession with what to us seems monstrous.

With the domination of Western influences, however, there remains little new life in those age-old conceptions or in this Hindu art. Nothing now can compare with the glories of the Gupta period when not only the great sculpture of Buddhism but the wonderful series of paintings in the Caves at Ajanta—a series which stand in Buddhistic art as the Franciscan paintings of Giotto stand in Christian—left us their treasures. Nothing can equal the marvels of the great Stupa out at Borobudur in distant Java which in the eighth century retold the whole legend of Buddha and symbolised the sevenfold path in a miracle of carved stone ; or of that vast temple, the Angkor Wat, away in Cambodia which was built during the





eleventh and twelfth centuries. Once in the sixteenth century, under the influence of that noble spirit Akbar, Mughal and Rajput painting, stimulated by the genius of near-by Persia, had a brief period of loveliness, achieving a delightful decorative quality and a charming character of its own. But the school passed away, as that unity of religion which Akbar had inaugurated broke down again after his death. India became the field for vast exploitation and her own people lost grip of their destiny. Only in recent years, at the instigation of such master-spirits as that of Rabindranath Tagore and his artist brother Abanindro Nath Tagore, has there seemed to be a new hope for a revival of Hindu art based on the magnificent traditions of her own great past.



### XXXIII

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE FAR EAST

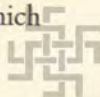
### JAPANESE COLOUR-PRINTS AND THE ART OF WHISTLER

#### § 1

THE beginning of the artistic influence of Japan on Europe is generally dated from the International Exhibition held at London in 1862, when examples of Japanese art shown made a profound impression on all who studied them. Seidlitz, in his *History of Japanese Colour-Prints*, gives the same date, but this authority traces the first discovery of Japanese art in Europe to a Japanese shop in the Rue de Rivoli, Paris. This shop, known as "La Porte Chinoise" and owned by a dealer named Soye, was frequented by a number of artists who delighted in the colour-prints by Hokusai, Hiroshige, and others which they found there. To this shop came Manet, Degas, Monet, and other French artists afterwards to become famous, and to it also came a young American artist, James McNeill Whistler. The Japanese have a perfect instinct of decoration, and consequently these colour-prints made an immediate and powerful appeal to a young artist who already had within him the instinct of decoration. In the work of Hokusai and Hiroshige, Whistler recognised those qualities which above all he desired to have in his own work.

#### § 2

Among the artists of the nineteenth century Whistler holds a unique position. He was the first great painter of American birth to win universal renown. His life was a long struggle against hostile criticism and misunderstanding, and he defended his art and his ideals with the pungent brilliancy of a wit and with the undaunted pugnacity of a soldier. By example and precept he eventually revolutionised English ideas about art and interior decoration. He compelled people who stubbornly repeated "Every Picture tells a Story," to realise at long last that *every picture ought to sing a tune*, that is to say, it ought to utter forth a melody of line and a harmony of colour; in a word, he compelled all England and the United States to recognise the decorative as well as the illustrative element in painting. More than any other English-speaking man Whistler opened our eyes to the true value of Velazquez and Hokusai, and he invented a new style of portraiture in which



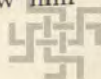


Spanish realism was exquisitely wedded to a Japanese sense of decoration. A stranger within our gates, he revealed England to the English and recorded, both in his etchings and in his paintings, poetic aspects of London's riverside, aspects to which hitherto all artists had been blind, aspects the beauty of which all can now see.

Whistler was born on July 10, 1834, at Lowell, in Massachusetts, and was baptized there with the Christian names of James Abbott. This second name he dropped in later life and substituted for it his mother's maiden name, McNeill. His father, Major George Washington Whistler, after leaving the United States army, became a railway engineer, and in 1842 journeyed to Russia with his wife and family : he had been appointed chief adviser of the railway under construction between Moscow and St. Petersburg. The most important consequence to James Whistler of this boyhood stay in Russia was that in St. Petersburg he learnt to speak French fluently. His father died in 1849, when the widow returned with her children to the United States.

Following in his father's footsteps, James Whistler in 1851 entered the military college of West Point, but after three years of desultory study he was dismissed, chiefly owing to his deplorable failure in chemistry. The first question in his oral examination floored him completely, and later in life Whistler humorously said, "If silicon had been a gas I might have become a general in the United States army." Even from his Russian days Whistler had shown a remarkable capacity for drawing, and his delight in sketching prompted his relatives, after his West Point failure, to obtain for him a post as draughtsman in the Government Coast Survey Department at Washington, thinking that this occupation might be more congenial to him. To some extent it was, for here he learnt to engrave and etch, and he executed an excellent plate of a view, taken from the sea, of cliffs along the coast ; but the fancy heads and figure which he irrelevantly added in the margin showed that he could not take his topographical studies seriously as a preliminary to map-making, but only as an excuse for sketching. In February, 1855, he resigned his position, and the end of the year found him an art student in Paris.

Many painters have spent joyous student-days in Paris, but few of them bear the traces of it in their lives as Whistler did. He had barely turned twenty-one when he arrived in Paris, and his high-spirited temperament and sense of fun delighted in all the antics which then distinguished the Bohemians of the Latin Quarter. In those days the art students lived a life apart, making themselves noticed by wearing unorthodox clothes, playing all sorts of practical jokes, affecting to despise the common mortal, and never so happy as when they succeeded in shocking and bewildering what they called the "bourgeois." Whistler plunged hot-foot into this way of life, and, as the distinguished French critic Théodore Duret, who knew him

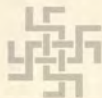




*Rischgitz Collection.*

“AT THE PIANO,” BY WHISTLER (1834–1903)

This early work, painted in 1859, was the first picture the artist exhibited in London. It shows us Whistler's favourite niece, Annie, and her mother, Mrs. Seymour Haden, who was the artist's half-sister.





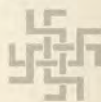
well, has remarked, there was grafted on him "the habit of a separate pose, whimsical attire, a way of despising and setting at defiance the 'vulgar herd' incapable of seeing and feeling like an artist. This combination of the distinctive characteristics of a French art student and the manner of an American gentleman, in a man otherwise full of life, spirit, and individuality, made of Whistler a quaint original who could not fail to be remarked everywhere."

But all the time he was amusing himself he worked, not so much in the studio of Gleyre—his official place of training, but irregularly attended—as in the streets and cafés of Paris and in his rooms. He divided his time between etching and painting, and in the former he appeared almost as a master in the first "French Set" published as early as 1858. In the following year he produced his first great individual achievement in painting, "At the Piano," which, though rejected by the Paris Salon of 1859, was hung at the Royal Academy in 1860 and subsequently purchased by the Academician John Philip, R.A. In this picture, which represents his half-sister, Mrs. Seymour Haden, seated, playing the piano, against which her little daughter Annie, in white, is standing, Whistler already shows the influence of Velazquez. Philip was well known as an intense admirer of this master, and it was doubtless the Spanish qualities in Whistler's painting which led the older artist to buy it. Two years later Whistler set out for Madrid with the intention of seeing the pictures by Velazquez in the Prado, but on the way he stopped at a seaside resort, where he nearly got drowned while bathing and had to return to Paris without going to Madrid.

In 1863 he made his second attempt to exhibit in the Paris Salon, and again the jury rejected his picture, the full-length portrait of a young Irish girl, known as "Jo," dressed in white, holding a white flower, and standing against a white curtain. "The White Girl," as it was first called, was the beginning of a series of pictures in which Whistler deliberately experimented in improvising a colour harmony based on the infinitely delicate gradations of one dominant colour. It was afterwards entitled "Symphony in White No. I."

So many paintings by artists of great talent were rejected by the Salon this year that the Emperor Napoleon III intervened, and by his order a selection of the rejected works was shown in a special room which became famous as the *Salon des Refusés*. Of this epoch-making exhibition more will be said in the next chapter, when dealing with French painters who were Whistler's contemporaries, but for the moment it must suffice to say that among the works there exhibited was "The White Girl," which elicited high praise from the more advanced critics.

From 1859 Whistler had divided his time between Paris and London, and though he had many friends and admirers in the former city, he was





*W. J. Stacey.*

**"THE LITTLE WHITE GIRL," BY WHISTLER**

National Gallery, London

For sheer beauty this portrait of his once favourite model, afterwards Mrs. Joanna Abbott, was never surpassed by Whistler. This picture inspired Swinburne to write his poem "Before the Mirror." In 1919 it was bequeathed by Mr. Arthur Studd to the National Gallery.



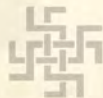




"BLACK LION WHARF," BY WHISTLER

W. F. Mansell.

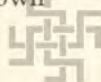
One of the most famous etchings in his early "Thames Set," this work shows the precision and delicacy of Whistler's draughtsmanship in 1859. He was the first artist to perceive and record the picturesqueness of the Thames in mid-London.



hurt at the lack of official recognition. In 1863 he fixed his residence in London, where several of his family were already established. Whistler's father had married twice, and one of the daughters by his first wife had married the English surgeon Seymour Haden, who afterwards made a great reputation as an etcher. Whistler's mother also had now left America and was living in London with her second son William, a doctor. James Whistler himself had not only stayed and exhibited in London, but had worked there, for in 1859 he had already begun the series of etchings known as "The Thames Set," which marks the culminating point of his first etching period. One of these, "Black Lion Wharf," may be taken as an example of the perfection of his technique in 1859, of the lightness and elasticity of his line, and of the vivacity of the whole. Though he afterwards produced etchings, perfect of their kind, in quite another style, Whistler never did anything better in their own way than some of the plates in "The Thames Set."

Whistler settled down in Chelsea, and became friendly with his neighbour Rossetti, who shared his taste for blue-and-white Chinese porcelain and for Japanese colour-prints, and during his first years in London the artistic influence of the Far East became more pronounced in Whistler's art. He surrounded himself with Oriental objects and introduced them constantly into his pictures. In 1864 he painted "The Gold Screen," against which sat a young woman in Japanese costume, surrounded by other variously coloured objects from the Far East. About the same time he painted the beautiful "Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine," in which brilliant colours are again afforded by a Japanese dress. The original of this portrait was Miss Christina Spartali, daughter of the Greek Consul-General in London. Her sister Marie Spartali, afterwards Mrs. Stillman, had been a pupil of Rossetti and sat to him for "Fiametta" and other paintings. Owing to the family likeness common to the two sisters, it has been said that at this time Whistler was subject to Rossetti's influence, but the resemblance between their works is a superficial one due only to the likeness of their respective models. There is no evidence that Whistler borrowed any of Rossetti's methods, and the chief influences during the years in which Whistler formed his style of painting were Courbet and Manet—as we shall see in the next chapter—Velazquez and the masters of Japan. In etching he was principally influenced by Rembrandt and Méryon.

"The Princess of the Porcelain Country," accepted by the Salon in 1865, was the first work by Whistler to be shown in any official exhibition in Paris. Other pictures of this Japanese period were "The Lange Leizen," in the Academy of 1864, "The Balcony," in the Academy of 1870, and, most beautiful and best known of all, "The Little White Girl," also known



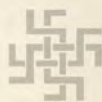




*W. F. Mansell.*

**"LA PRINCESSE DU PAYS DE LA PORCELAINE," BY WHISTLER**

One of the masterpieces of Whistler's pronounced Japanese period, this picture is a costume portrait of Miss Christina Spartali, daughter of the Greek Consul-General in London. It was formerly in the possession of the shipowner, Mr. F. R. Leyland, and occupied a central position in the famous "Peacock Room" decorated for him by Whistler.





*Rischgitz Collection.*

**"PORTRAIT OF MISS CICELY HENRIETTA ALEXANDER," BY WHISTLER**

This charming portrait of the younger daughter of Mr. W. C. Alexander is one of Whistler's most daring colour-schemes, a bright harmony of grey and green. Note the butterflies in the left-hand top corner, which give a note of summer-time gaiety to the composition and repeat Whistler's own "trade-mark," the butterfly signature on the wall.



as "Symphony in White No. II," shown at the Academy in the same year. The Japanese fan in the girl's hand is the only direct confession of Oriental influence in this picture, which otherwise unites the Spanish gravity and realism of "At the Piano" with the gay-coloured decorative-ness of a Hokusai or Hiroshige. After having seen this picture in Whistler's studio, Swinburne wrote the poem afterwards included in *Poems and Ballads* :

## BEFORE THE MIRROR

Come snow, come wind or thunder,  
 High up in air,  
 I watch my face and wonder  
 At my bright hair.  
 Nought else exists or grieves  
 The rose at heart, that heaves  
 With love of her own leaves, and lips that pair.

I cannot tell what pleasures  
 Or what pains were,  
 What pale new loves and treasures  
 New years will bear ;  
 What beam will fall, what shower  
 With grief or joy for dower,  
 But one thing knows the flower, the flower is fair.

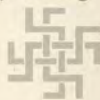
Whistler also painted a "Symphony in White No. III." In this, two girls, one in cream, one in white, recline on a white sofa, while a fan on the floor and the flowers of an azalea in a corner repeat the dominant whites. The motive of the artist in choosing these colour-schemes and calling the pictures "symphonies" was at this time beyond the comprehension of even professional art critics, and one of them wrote of this picture in the *Saturday Review* :

In the "Symphony in White No. III" by Mr. Whistler there are many dainty varieties of tint, but it is not precisely a symphony in white. One lady has a yellowish dress and brown hair and a bit of blue ribbon, the other has a red fan, and there are flowers and green leaves. There is a girl in white on a white sofa, but even this girl has reddish hair ; and of course there is the flesh colour of the complexions.

To this Whistler promptly retorted :

*Bon Dieu !* did this wise person expect white hair and chalked faces ? And does he then, in his astounding consequence, believe that a symphony in F contains no other note, but shall be a continued repetition of F, F, F ? . . . Fool !

This was one of the earliest of Whistler's critical encounters, taking





*W. F. Mansell.*

"THE ARTIST'S MOTHER," BY WHISTLER  
Luxembourg, Paris

When M. Bourgeois, Minister of Fine Arts, expressed a desire to purchase this work for the French Nation, Whistler replied : " The picture you have chosen is precisely the one I could most earnestly wish to see become the object of so solemn a consecration."



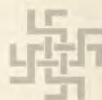
place when the picture was exhibited at the Academy in 1867, and the critics were soon to learn that here was a painter who could hit back with interest.

As the successive exhibition of Whistler's pictures enabled the tendencies and peculiarities of his work to be more clearly seen, the public, the critics, and the Royal Academy itself became more and more hostile to him, and finally took up an attitude of undisguised ill-will. In 1872 his characteristic painting of his mother, now universally recognised to be one of the great portraits of the century, was narrowly rejected by the Academy, and its final acceptance was only due to the staunch championship of the veteran Sir William Boxall, R.A., who threatened to resign from the Council if the picture were not hung. Doubtless Whistler's habit of giving his works titles borrowed from musical terms prejudiced the public against them. An extremist far more in his titles than in his actual manner of painting, Whistler went so far as to call his picture of his mother, "Arrangement in Grey and Black." He defended this title by saying :

That is what it is. To me it is interesting as a picture of my mother ; but what can or ought the public to care about the identity of the portrait ?

In his desire to emphasise the importance of decorative design and colour in painting, Whistler became a little inhuman. As one of his younger critics pertinently observed, we can find an "arrangement of grey and black" in a coal-scuttle ; we find far more in Whistler's "Mother," we find reverence for age, character, tenderness, and affection. It has become one of the great pictures of the world, not only because it is a pleasing pattern of colours, but because it is a true work of deep emotion tenderly expressed.

No longer welcome at the Royal Academy, Whistler was fortunate in soon securing a new exhibition centre. Sir Coutts Lindsay, a rich banker and amateur painter who patronised the arts, had the Grosvenor Gallery built in Bond Street, and at the first exhibition opened there in May 1877 Whistler was represented by seven pictures. These included the portrait of Carlyle, now at Glasgow, a painting similar in style to the artist's "Mother," described as "An Arrangement in Brown" ; a full-length of Irving as Philip II of Spain, described as "Arrangement in Black No. III" ; and four nocturnes, two in blue and silver, one in blue and gold, and one in black and gold. Whistler had not confined his studies of the Thames in mid-London to his etched work ; he had used these subjects for paintings in the 'sixties, among them being "Old Battersea Bridge," and "Chelsea in Ice," but in this new series of evening effects by the riverside he shocked the conventions of the day more than he had yet done by his "symphonies."



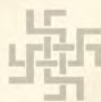


*W. F. Mansell.*

NOCTURNE—BLUE AND GOLD—"OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE," BY WHISTLER

Tate Gallery, London

One of the celebrated nocturnes exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, when Ruskin accused Whistler of "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." The painter was awarded only a farthing damages in the libel action which ensued ; but two years after Whistler's death, this picture, for which he had asked 200 guineas, was purchased at 2000 guineas for the National Gallery.





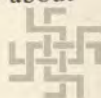
These poetic paintings of night represent the extreme point of originality to which Whistler went. Particularities of scene and landscape exist in these nocturnes only as accessories ; the real subject is the limpidity of the atmosphere, water illumined by the pale rays of the moon, mysterious shadows, the great silhouettes of dark nights, the darkness intensified sometimes by a splash of fireworks against the sky. To-day, though Cremorne is no more, we can recognise the truth as well as the beauty in "Cremorne Lights" and similar works, for Whistler has now taught us to use our own experience in looking at these pictures of moonlight and lights reflected in the water. But at the time of their first appearance these nocturnes were incomprehensible to most people, who looked in them for topographical details which the veil of night would naturally conceal. In an eloquent and moving passage in his lecture, known as the "Ten o'Clock," Whistler afterwards explained what he saw and painted by the Thames at eventide :

When the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home ; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand as they have ceased to see, and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master, her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her.

But in 1877 Whistler's views on the poetry of night were unknown, and the magic of his brush could not immediately convert the public to appreciation of pictures the like of which had never before been seen in Europe. Something approaching them had been seen in Japan, as we may see by comparing Hokusai's bridge pictures with those of Whistler, but Hokusai and Hiroshige were not known then as they are to-day. Whistler's nocturnes were regarded by the majority as a smear of uniform colour in which no distinct forms could be considered. The painter was looked upon as a charlatan and buffoon, and among those who attacked him, sad to relate, was the stout defender of Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites. John Ruskin, no wiser in this respect than the others, permitted himself to write the following in *Fors Clavigera* on July 2, 1877 :

For Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of cockney impudence before now ; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face.

Strange that Ruskin did not remember that the selfsame phrase about



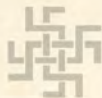


"CREMORNE LIGHTS," BY WHISTLER

*W. F. Mansell.*

National Gallery, London

"When the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens and fairyland is before us."—*J. McNeill Whistler.*





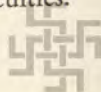
"flinging a pot of paint" had been used a generation earlier by a critic of one of Turner's sunsets. Then Ruskin had been on the side of the artist, now he did not understand and stood with the Philistines. Time has avenged the insult to genius uncomprehended, and the "Nocturne—Blue and Gold—Old Battersea Bridge" which Ruskin in 1877 thought not worth two hundred guineas, was in 1905 eagerly purchased for two thousand guineas and presented to the nation.

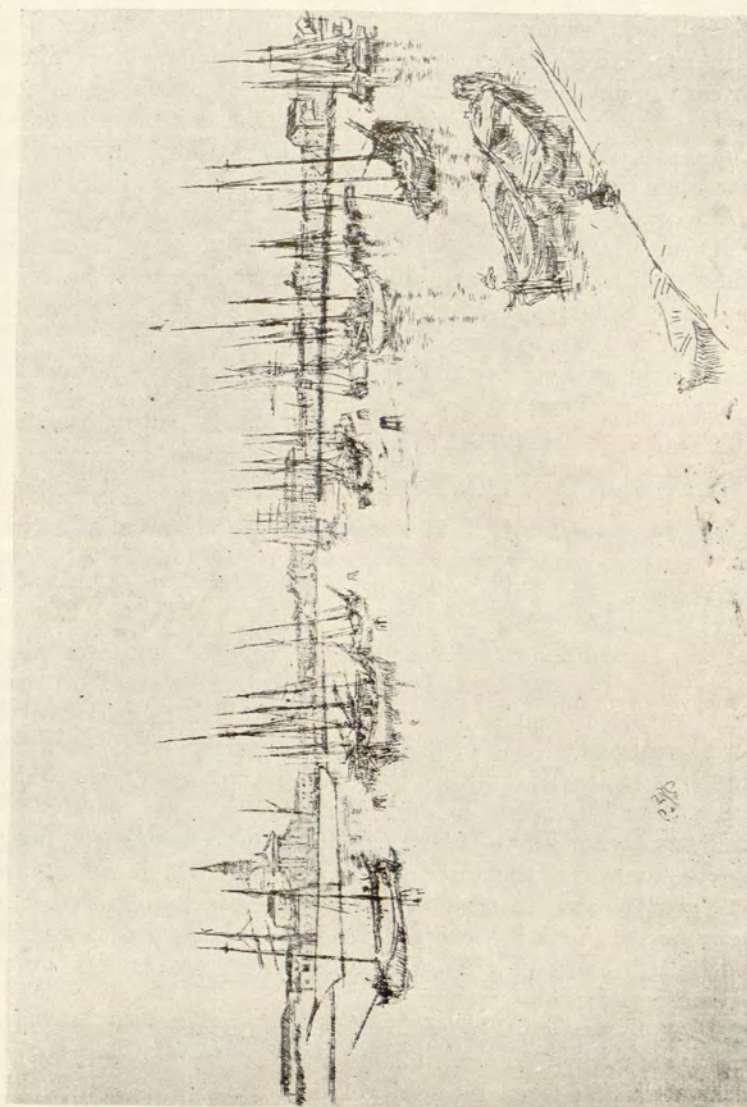
Whistler's exhibits brought him all the publicity any artist could desire—all London was talking of his nocturnes—but the hostility of the critics, and particularly the savage onslaught of Ruskin, scared away purchasers. When he exhibited for the second time at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1878, Whistler found that Ruskin's denunciation was stopping the sale of his pictures and, after some hesitation, he decided to bring a libel action against him.

The case was heard on the 25th and 26th of November 1878, before Mr. Justice Huddleston and a special jury. It created a great sensation, but Whistler was ill-advised to bring the action, because artistic questions can never be satisfactorily settled in a court of law. Popular sympathy was with the critic, who had so often been right in the past, and Whistler's brilliant repartees in the witness-box did him no good, for they only tended to confirm the opinion that he was an amusing jester who was not to be taken seriously. In cross-examination the opposing counsel elicited the fact that the "Nocturne in Black and Gold" had been painted in two days, and then said, "The labour of two days, then, is that for which you ask two hundred guineas?" "No," replied Whistler with dignity; "I ask it for the knowledge of a lifetime."

The point at issue really was whether the nocturnes were or were not works of art, and this was a matter obviously over the heads of the jury. Albert Moore, giving evidence for Whistler, praised his pictures highly and declared that they showed not "eccentricity" but "originality." William Rossetti also pronounced the nocturnes to be true works of art, but on the other side Frith declared they were not, and Burne-Jones agreed with him because, though he admitted that the nocturnes had "fine colour and atmosphere," he considered that they lacked "complete finish." Tom Taylor, the art critic of *The Times*, giving evidence for Ruskin, attempted to explain what Burne-Jones meant by finish, and for this purpose produced a picture by Titian. But when this was handed to the jury, one of them, mistaking it for a picture by Whistler, exclaimed, "Oh, come! we've had enough of these Whistlers," and they all refused to look at it!

In the end Whistler was awarded the contemptuous sum of one farthing damages. This meant that he had to pay his own law costs, and since nobody would buy his pictures now, he was soon in money difficulties.





*Rischitz Collection.*

"SAN GIORGIO," 1880, BY WHISTLER

A brilliant example of Whistler's second manner in etching which he developed in Venice, where he stayed for some months after his bankruptcy. Again "fairylane is before us," and with the utmost economy of means the artist has suggested a characteristic aspect of Venice and its shipping, flooded with light and air.

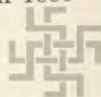


He revenged himself by issuing a pamphlet, *Art and Art Critics*, in which his enemies were neatly and wittily put in their places, but this did not help him to live. To put an end to an untenable situation, early in 1879 he had to abandon his residence, "The White House," in Chelsea. He became a bankrupt and all his belongings were sold to satisfy his creditors.

Another man might have been crushed by the misfortunes which now crowded on him, but fortunately Whistler was an etcher as well as a painter, and at this moment, when his pictures were unsaleable, he again turned to etching. He came to an arrangement with a firm, which advanced him a sum of money on etchings he engaged to execute, and with this he went in 1879 to Venice, where he developed a new and beautiful style in etching. In comparison with his earlier work, these Venice etchings were lighter in handling and more simplified in line. "San Giorgio" shows how spacious an effect Whistler was able to secure with a minimum of means.

These new etchings were not at first popular with the public and the critics any more than the nocturnes, but they were appreciated and purchased by many discriminating print-collectors, and when Whistler returned to Chelsea towards the end of 1880 his position gradually improved. In 1883 he held a second and larger exhibition of his Venetian pieces at the Fine Art Society, and prepared an extraordinary catalogue, in which under each numbered exhibit appeared quotations taken from influential journals and well-known writers, *all hostile*, and beginning with this extract from *Truth*: "Another crop of Mr. Whistler's little jokes." The exhibition, which was beautifully arranged and staged, together with this quaint catalogue, caused an immense sensation. Never before had an artist made fun of his critics to this extent. Visitors could not fail to recognise the refinement in works like "San Giorgio," and when they read a sentence like "Whistler is eminently vulgar," the criticism recoiled on the writer, not the artist. The tide began to turn, and a considerable opinion now became definitely favourable to Whistler. He began to paint again, people like Mrs. Meux, the wife of the brewer, and Lady Archibald Campbell came to him for portraits, and his position was immensely strengthened when his "Portrait of the Artist's Mother" obtained a medal and a brilliant success in the Paris Salon of 1883. Later this work was bought by the French Government for the Luxembourg.

For the next few years Whistler made Paris his principal exhibition centre. Exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1881, his "Portrait of Miss Cicely Alexander" had been dreadfully abused by English critics; but in the Paris Salon of 1884 it was singled out for general approbation. For a brief season Whistler exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists, of which he was elected President in June 1886, and under his presidency this Society held the most brilliant exhibitions in its history. But in 1888



there was a cabal against him by members discontented with his rule. Whistler was compelled to resign, and was followed by a number of talented artists whom he had persuaded to join the Society. When asked to explain what had happened, the ex-President replied, "It is quite simple ; the artists have left and the British remain."

The year after Whistler met with this rebuff in London, he was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, which showed the esteem in which he was now held in France, and in 1892 he took a house at Paris in the Rue de Bac. He can hardly be said to have settled there, however, for he returned several times to London. In 1890 he had published a collection of letters and various controversial matter, including a report, with his own marginal comments, of the Ruskin trial, under the title of *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, and this publication not only increased his reputation as a wit but showed that he possessed a distinct literary style of his own. This was followed some years later by *The Baronet and the Butterfly*, a pamphlet giving the artist's version of a quarrel and lawsuit with Sir William Eden over a portrait of Lady Eden. Whistler had early adopted the device of a butterfly as his sign-manual and signature, but he was a butterfly with a sting, as he confessed himself to be in the little drawings with which he decorated his publications.

All the quarrels and encounters of his stormy life cannot be recounted here, but in the end he was victorious in London as in Paris. The purchase of his "Mother" by the French Government helped to turn the scale in England. A new generation of artists gave Whistler a banquet in London to celebrate the event, and in the same year (1892) the most important one-man-show of his pictures yet held anywhere was opened in the old Goupil Gallery in Bond Street. This included nearly all his most famous works, among them the disgraced nocturnes, but now only a minority objected to his pictures or his titles, and the success of the exhibition revealed the change which the course of years had brought about in London opinion. The Royal Academy was no longer the power it had been in his earlier days ; its prestige had declined, and there was now a powerful body of outside artists who admired Whistler. In 1898 the most eminent of these formed the "International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers," and invited Whistler to become its first President, a position he held till his death on July 17, 1903. The exhibitions of this new Society proved that Whistler was not only respected by artists, but had become fashionable with all persons of taste.

To sum up, it may be said that after forty years of incessant battling, Whistler enjoyed a decade of tranquil success, but his last years were saddened by private trouble. In 1888 he had married the widow of E. W. Godwin, an architect, and his wife's death in 1896 was a great blow to





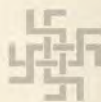
the artist. With his loneliness he grew restless, and though his continued devotion to his work saved him from melancholy, he travelled about a good deal. He was visiting Holland in the summer of 1902 when he was seized with a heart attack, and though he gained enough strength to return to London, and even to begin working again in the winter, a relapse in the following June prostrated him, and on Friday, July 17, he was seized with syncope and died. France, Italy, Bavaria, and Dresden had all conferred distinctions on him ; but in America, his birthplace, and in England, where he lived and worked for the greater part of his life, Whistler received no official recognition.

## § 3

In his treatment of buildings, particularly in his earlier etchings, Whistler was undoubtedly influenced by the work of Charles Méryon, one of the earliest and greatest etchers of architectural subjects. The life of this artist is one of the saddest stories in modern art. Charles Méryon was born in 1821 ; he was the son of a French dancer, and his father is said to have been an Englishman of good family, but during his early life he had little assistance from either of his parents, and from his boyhood he had to struggle to make his own way in the Bohemian underworld of Paris.

During Méryon's lifetime, unfortunately, etchings were not so popular as they are to-day. For a century and a half after Rembrandt etching, as a pure and separate art, lay comparatively unnoticed ; but undeterred by want of patrons, poverty, and ill-health, Méryon devoted himself to the revival of this almost forgotten art, and became one of its greatest masters that the world has yet seen. To record on copper the beauty and interest of the architecture of Paris became the passion of Méryon's life, and his etchings are unique for the imagination and emotional force they display, combined with scrupulously exact drawing of the architectural features which form his theme. His famous etching "Le Stryge," showing us a view of Paris from Notre Dame, with one of the quaint gargoyles of the Cathedral occupying a prominent place in the foreground, reveals not only the perfection of his technique, with its fine, nervous line and rich velvety blacks, but also the blend of realism and imagination which characterises this artist's work.

These masterly views of Paris were offered for sale by the artist at the price of one franc (then worth about tenpence in English money), but even at this ridiculous figure they did not find enough purchasers to enable him to keep body and soul together. Privation, hardship, and want of proper nourishment inevitably told on his health, and eventually his nerves gave way and he was put away as insane in the hospital of Charenton. But though of a nervous temperament, his brain was not diseased, and





*Insatiable vampire. L'Éternelle Luxure  
Sur la Grande Cité convoite sa pâture*

*Autotype Co. Ltd.*

"LE STRYGE," BY MÉRYON (1821-68)

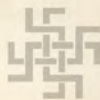
The career of this great French etcher is one of the saddest tragedies in art history. Unable in his lifetime to sell his prints at tenpence in sufficient numbers to save him from starvation, Charles Méryon died in a hospital literally from want of proper nourishment. A few years after his death his genius was so appreciated that his etchings were eagerly bought at £5 a piece, and in recent years collectors have paid over a thousand pounds for an etching which the artist could not sell for a franc.





after some months of good feeding in the hospital Méryon became normal, and it was seen that his breakdown was wholly due to starvation. He was allowed to leave Charenton and began to work again, drawing and etching in Paris, but the unhappy genius had no better fortune and seemed unable to secure the minimum amount of food that a human body requires. Again he starved, with the same result, his mind became unhinged, and he was taken back to Charenton, where he died in 1868.

By a cruel irony of fate the etchings began to be appreciated almost immediately after the etcher's death. Never before or since has the art world seen so rapid and sensational an increase in value. The explanation is that the interest excited by the plates of Whistler and Seymour Haden led to a feverish hunt after other etchers, and so the fame of Méryon was established. Within a few years of his death the etchings he had vainly tried to sell for tenpence apiece were changing hands at five pounds; the prices of them rose rapidly and steadily from tens to hundreds of pounds, and within recent years rich collectors have paid more than a thousand pounds to secure a fine impression of an etching by Méryon.



## POST IMPRESSIONISM, CUBISM, AND FUTURISM

THE ART OF CÉZANNE, VAN GOGH, GAUGUIN, MATISSE,  
AND PICASSO

## § I

WHAT is "Post impressionism"? This term was invented by the English painter and art critic, Roger Fry, to cover various art movements which came *after* Impressionism, and since some of these movements have been developments of Impressionism, while others have been a reaction from it, confusion can only be avoided by considering separately the principal movements and the artists associated with them.

The reader of this OUTLINE will have observed that, from the days of Giotto down to the close of the nineteenth century, the development of the main stream of European painting was in the direction of a more perfect representation of the appearances of natural forms. In the nineteenth century two causes contributed to change the direction of painting. One was the invention of Photography, which set painters wondering what part the representative element really played in a picture; the other was the new Colour-science of the Impressionists, who seemed to have pushed truth of representation to a point where further developments were impossible. Ambitious painters sighed, like Alexander, for new worlds to conquer: the problems of foreshortening, of perspective, of the true colour of shadows, all had been solved triumphantly by their predecessors. What was there left to be done by a painter who did not wish to imitate the work of any other artist? It was inevitable that a reaction should set in. Painting, according to the neo-Impressionist formulas described in the previous chapter, had become, as we have seen, a highly complicated and scientific business. A new generation began to argue that, after all, painting was not a science but an art, and that its primary function was not the accurate representation of Nature but the expression of an emotion. A fresh start was made in a new direction. Emphasis was now to be laid on expressing an idea rather than on rendering appearances, and it was held that by reducing the facts of phenomena to a minimum the idea might





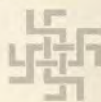
be able to shine forth more brightly. The vessel of art having become overloaded, it was thought advisable to lighten the ship by throwing some of the cargo overboard.

Already there had been a forerunner in this direction. Honoré Daumier (1808-79), though chiefly known to his contemporaries as a pungent caricaturist and lithographer, also executed oil-paintings which have become highly esteemed since his death. These pictures, sometimes satirising the Law Courts whose "justice" roused him to fury, often based on some illuminating incident in the history of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, were unlike any other pictures of his time, and always expressed an idea with a maximum of intellectual force and a minimum of colour and pictorial means.

Half a century before his time, he had the courage to eliminate trappings and redundancies from his painting, and to give us plastic conceptions of rugged simplicity. In so doing he anticipated the most interesting and fruitful of modern pictorial movements.

It was from the heart of Impressionism itself that the most powerful reaction began, and the artist usually regarded now as the "Father of Post-Impressionism" is Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), who during his lifetime exhibited with the Impressionists and was long thought to be one of them. But though the friend and companion of Pissarro, Renoir, and Monet, Cézanne differed from them in many ways. To begin with, he was a southerner, born at Aix in Provence, while all the others belonged to Northern France; secondly, while accepting their colour theories, he never wholly adopted in practice their prismatic palette; thirdly, while they were primarily occupied with registering fugitive effects of light, he was always most concerned with eternal verities. His aim is best explained in his own words: "I wish to make of Impressionism something solid and durable, like the art of the Old Masters."

If we look at his landscapes, or his "Card Players," or his portrait of himself, we do not think first of the light by which these things are seen, but rather of the weight, density, and solidity of the forms depicted. The art of Cézanne is simpler and less complicated than that of Monet and Pissarro; his analysis of colour is more summary, his expression ruder and more forcible. His colour is entirely his own, and the prevalence of browns in his pictures itself separates him from the other Impressionists; but this brown with him is not a convention, it is true to the colour of the sun-scorched landscape of his home, of the South of France, in which he chiefly worked. His paintings may seem clumsy in handling beside the delicate work of Renoir and Sisley, but by reason of his whole-hearted sincerity and honesty of purpose they make a deep and strong impression.

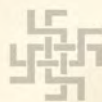




*E. Druet.*

"PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST," BY PAUL CÉZANNE (1839-1906)

This is the painter who said, "I wish to make of Impressionism something solid and enduring, like the art of the Old Masters." His rugged painting of himself in middle age gives us an impression of substance and weight, which proves that the artist has achieved his object.





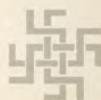


"THE CARD PLAYERS," BY PAUL CÉZANNE

*W. F. Mansell.*

The Louvre, Paris

A new phase of Impressionism is seen in this homely picture of two villagers playing cards in a rustic café. Light is no longer the "principal person" in the picture, for though the illumination is just, the sense of space and air admirably preserved, and the figures generalised and broadly treated, our interest is concentrated on the two men whose forms and characters are presented with a monumental simplicity and grandeur. This is not an effect of light, but a fragment of life.





*E. Druet.*

"LANDSCAPE IN PROVENCE," BY PAUL CÉZANNE

This essentially naturalistic painting of a scene in Southern France contains the germs of Cubism, for in his desire to give an effect of solidity and substance to houses and land, Cézanne here emphasises cubic forms and tends to sharpen curves into angles.

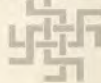


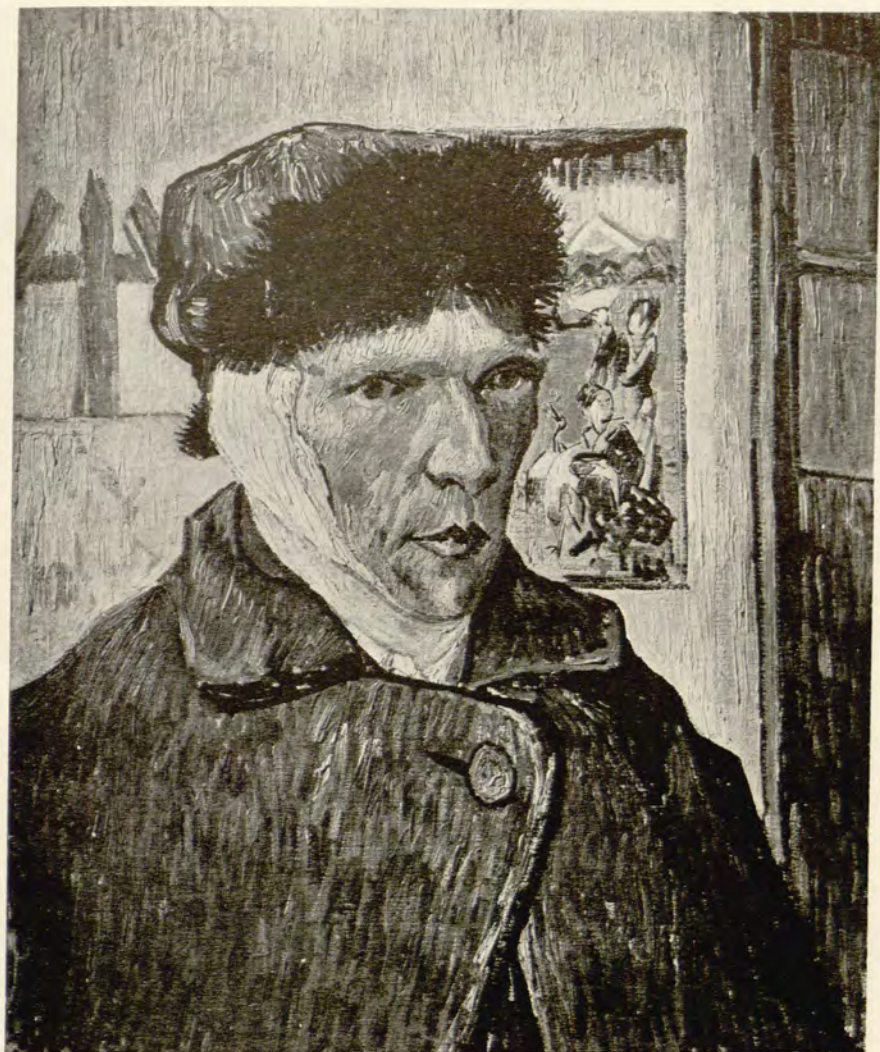


Cézanne was not a conscious revolutionary; his pronounced style was the result of a strong, incorruptibly honest mind struggling to express what his eye could see without any preconceived ideas as to the manner of expression. His private life was simple and uneventful, devoted to unremitting toil which was never recognised or honoured. After studying in Paris he returned to the South of France, where he lived and married on an allowance of £12 a month made him by his father, a banker. After his father's death he inherited a share of his fortune, but made little change in his manner of living. He did not paint to make money, but to learn more about Nature and life, and to express what he felt vaguely in his soul. It is related of him that after he had finished a study out of doors, he would often leave his painting against the nearest bush. With the last brush-stroke, his interest in the painting ceased: he had done all he could; and it was his wife who surreptitiously followed in his footsteps and garnered in the canvases so difficult at that time to sell.

Of Cézanne it may truly be said that he did not paint to live, but lived to paint, and owing to his absorption in the art of painting, and his consequent detachment from life, he tended to paint human beings as if they were still-life. So it comes about that some of Cézanne's most impressive paintings are simple pictures of still-life. In his work, as Duret has pointed out, "a few apples and a napkin on a table assume a kind of grandeur, in the same degree as a human head or a landscape with sea." In painting fruit Cézanne seemed able to suggest the tremendous power of Nature, so that pears and apples spread idly on a dinner-table become a revelation of the hidden forces of Nature, which brings fruits to birth. It is only now and again in his figure paintings that we get a glimpse of the passion for humanity which warms the work of a Rembrandt.

This quality, however, is abundantly present in the work of his younger contemporary, Vincent Van Gogh (1853-90), who exclaimed in one of his letters, "I want to paint humanity, humanity, and again humanity." A Dutchman by birth, Van Gogh was slow to find his true vocation, and he was close on thirty before he began painting. His brief life is full of romance and pathos. Always of a fanatical temper, and the son of a Lutheran pastor, Vincent began to earn his living as assistant to an art-dealer, but soon shocked his employers by his habit of quoting the Bible to prospective purchasers and pouring forth passionate sermons if they showed signs of purchasing pictures which he considered to be trivial and unworthy. For a few months he was a schoolmaster in England, but in 1877 he returned to Amsterdam, purposing to become a clergyman. He grew impatient in the dry atmosphere of a theological college, and set out as a missionary to the mining district of Borinage, in Belgium. Here his ardent sympathies with the hardships of the workers soon got



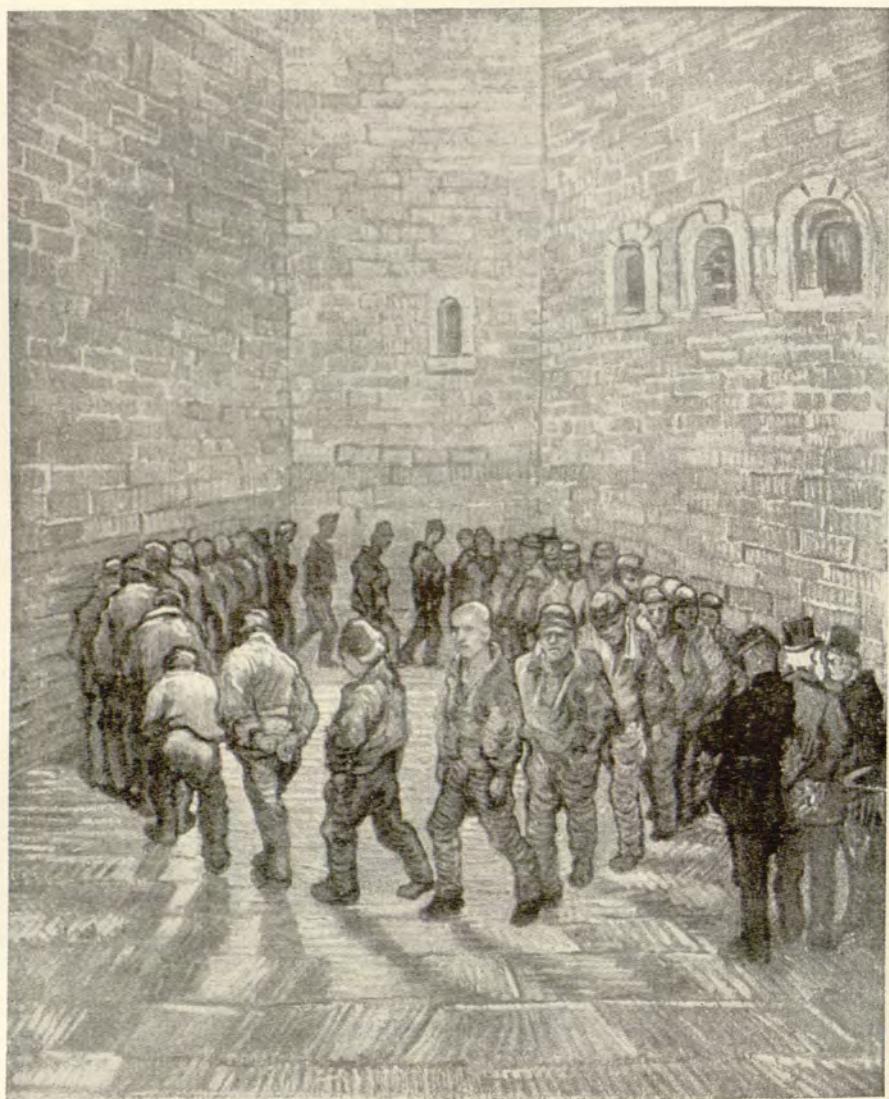


*E. Druet.*

"SELF-PORTRAIT," BY VINCENT VAN GOGH (1853-90)

This haunting portrait of himself was painted by Van Gogh after he had cut off his right ear in a fit of frenzy; hence the bandage round his head. The face, compared with the earlier portrait, betrays the tragedy of the artist's life, but the extraordinary vitality and power of the painting show that after recovering from his first mental breakdown Van Gogh's eyes were as keen and his hand as sure as ever they had been in the past.

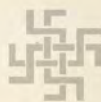




*E. Druet.*

**"THE PRISON YARD," BY VINCENT VAN GOGH**

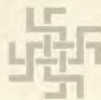
A masterpiece by an artist who once exclaimed, "I want to paint humanity, humanity, and again humanity." In this extraordinarily vivid impression of convicts taking their monotonous exercise in a prison yard, Van Gogh compels us to recognise the tragic dreariness of imprisonment and his own compassionate pity for outcasts of society who, whatever they may have done, are still human beings, doomed to feel and suffer.



him into trouble with the authorities ; he gave away all that he had with reckless generosity, and nearly starving himself, he began to relieve his emotions by drawing the people he could not help or comfort. Henceforward art claimed him, and though he had no prospect of being able to support himself in this way, he was encouraged to persevere, and entirely supported by his brother Theo, who had a good position in Paris. At first Van Gogh took Millet for his model, but after he had joined his brother in Paris in 1886 he was influenced by Pissarro and Seurat, and adhered to the neo-Impressionist ideals of painting. But in adopting their palette and technique Van Gogh showed his own individuality by using for the separation of colour, not points or patches, but fine lines of pigment, lines whipped on with extraordinary nervous force and passion. His colour touches are so alive that they have not inaptly been described as " wriggling little snakes." His portrait of himself with a beard shows his style of painting soon after he had learnt the secrets of Impressionism, and also reveals his own peculiar character. Van Gogh was not the inventor of a new technique ; but he rapidly developed a distinctive style of his own, remarkable for its vehemence of attack. " He was the most passionate of painters, and the extraordinary intensity of his vivid impressions may be likened to our vision of things seen momentarily in the duration of a lightning flash."

From Paris Van Gogh went to Arles in the South of France, where he exposed himself to the risks of sunstroke by frequently painting in blazing sunshine without any head-covering. A curious incident made public the fact that he was becoming abnormal. Teasing him for a present, a girl in a café once playfully said to him, " Well, if you can't give me anything else, give me one of your big ears." Shortly before Christmas this little waitress, whom the artist admired, was horrified to receive a parcel which was found to contain a freshly severed human ear. Van Gogh was found in bed with his head bleeding and with raging brain fever. Subsequently he was taken to an asylum, but his portrait of himself with a cap on his head and his head still bound, painted after this breakdown, proves that his hand had not lost its steadiness nor his eye its power to see essentials with brilliant intensity.

In the summer of 1889 he was well enough to leave Arles, and after a short stay in Paris, his brother arranged for him to live in the house of a doctor at Auvers-sur-Oise. Van Gogh appeared to be in the best of health and spirits, and there is no doubt that he fought bravely against the clouds which threatened his keen intellect. But the day came when he felt himself to be a doomed man, with nothing but mental darkness ahead, and on July 28, 1890, in a fit of depression he shot himself fatally. The fact that his mind eventually became unhinged, so that some of the pictures of his





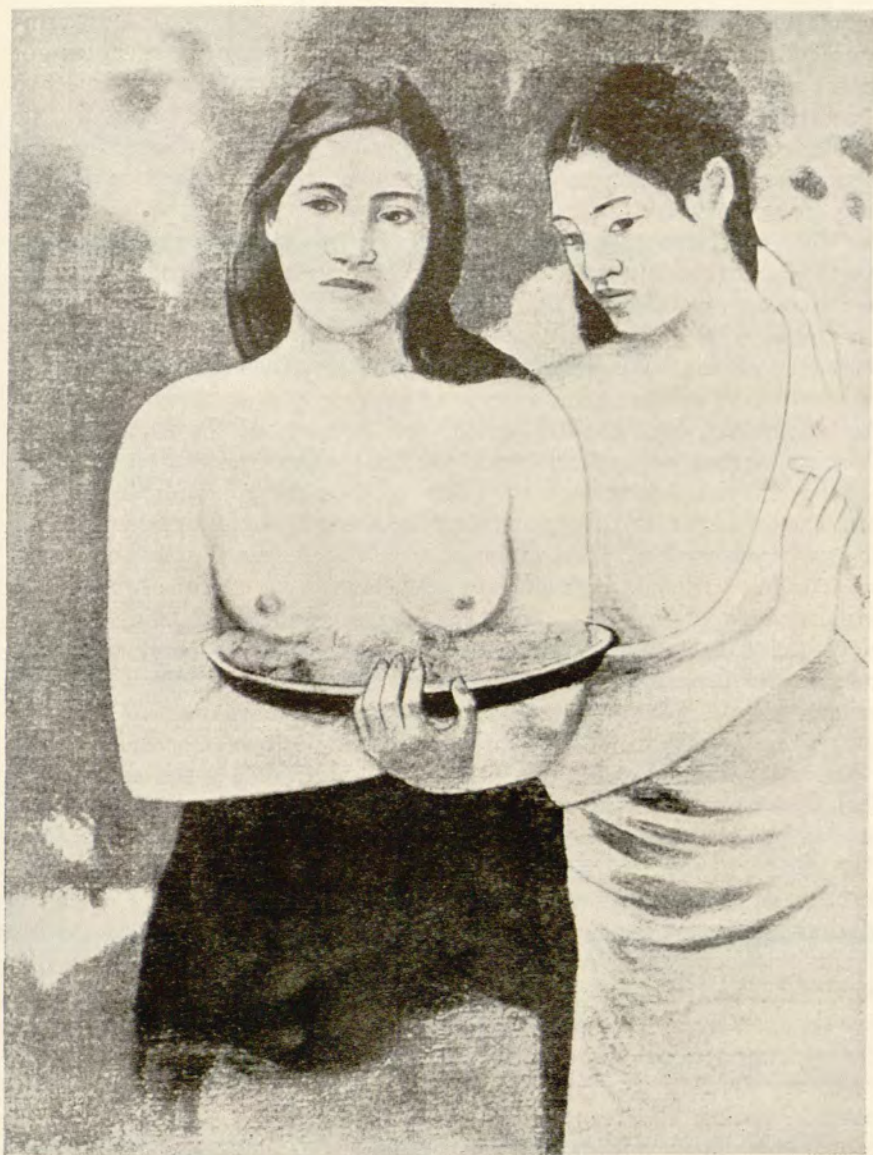
last years betray an abnormal vision, does not invalidate the splendid sanity of the bulk of Van Gogh's productions. Technically Van Gogh got his modelling by sweeping contours, instead of by a series of petty planes, and so gave weight to objects, while cleanly preserving their silhouettes as co-ordinated parts of a decorative design. We are impressed by his strength, as we are by that of Cézanne; but it is not physical strength alone, but also moral force. His colour is of a high order and pitch, showing a fine sensibility for the splendour of pigment, but Van Gogh was too seriously absorbed in life and humanity for his painting ever to degenerate into mere decorations. One of the pictures in which he most completely expressed himself was "The Prison Yard," in which he conjures up with forcible economy the tragic aspect of these prisoners pacing their monotonous round, makes the high walls eloquent of the impossibility of escape, and without a touch of sentimentality contrives to express his compassionate pity for these dregs of humanity who are yet "men and brothers."

§ 2

Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) also learnt painting from Camille Pissarro, whose style he copied closely in his early work, but at heart he was never a Realist. His father was a Breton, but his mother was a Peruvian Creole, and a passion for the Tropics was in his blood. As a boy he ran away and went to sea, but after several voyages in various parts of the world he returned to Paris and entered business life. One day in a shop window he saw some pictures which brought back memories of the light and colour he had seen in the Tropics; he made inquiries as to the authors, and so became acquainted with Pissarro. Gauguin was thirty at this time, and though he began painting now as an amateur, it was not till two years later, in 1880, that he began to exhibit, and another year passed before he decided to give all his time to art. Gauguin soon broke away from the dogmas of the neo-Impressionists, though his debt to them is confessed in the splendour of his colour—and for a time he was influenced by Cézanne, this influence showing itself in a tendency towards simplification. Gauguin made certain innovations of his own, he deliberately simplified forms and reintroduced the fashion of binding them with heavy dark outlines, and while his style grew more decorative his subjects became more imaginative.

In one of his letters Van Gogh records that while Gauguin was living with him at Arles he (Van Gogh) was for a while "led into working from imagination."

The association of Gauguin and Van Gogh was unfortunate, for their aims and temperaments were too distinct to mingle with ease. Van Gogh



*E. Druet.*

**"THE TAHITIANS," BY PAUL GAUGUIN (1848-1903)**

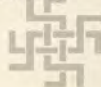
Convinced that modern European civilisation was diseased and unhealthy, Gauguin sailed to the Pacific to paint a primitive people in a primitive style. This picture of two natives of Tahiti is a typical example of the decorative simplicity and imaginative charm which distinguish his later works.





was all humility, Gauguin was proud and haughty, and though the warm-hearted Dutchman venerated his friend, the latter's cold cynicism often got on his nerves and contributed to his depression. Van Gogh wanted to devote his life to suffering humanity; Gauguin wanted to forget the suffering and dwell in an "enchanted land." After Van Gogh's mental collapse at Arles, Gauguin went to Brittany and established himself at Pont Aven, where he found "big, simple mortals and an unspoilt Nature." But even rural France was too sophisticated for a man whose romantic temperament found its ideal among the unspoilt barbarians of the Pacific. In 1891 Gauguin sailed for Tahiti, where he fulfilled his intention to paint a primitive folk in a primitive style. Admitting the technical interest and decorative merit of Gauguin's Brittany pictures, it remains doubtful whether he would have been so great a figure in modern art had he not, like R. L. Stevenson, been fascinated by the life and manners of the Kanakas. His Tahitian pictures with their exotic subjects made a wide appeal to the popular imagination, though they did not become generally known till after the artist's death in 1903. But if he complained bitterly at the lack of purchasers for his pictures, Gauguin delighted in his new home, and never regretted having left Europe. "I have escaped everything that is artificial, conventional, customary. I am entering into truth, into Nature." Nevertheless he idealised the Nature he found in the Pacific; he dwelt in a land of dreams and his pictures were charming conventions. When a literary friend in Paris quarrelled with his ideal, Gauguin replied: "Your civilisation is your disease, my barbarism is my restoration to health."

In the closing years of the nineteenth century Gauguin appeared to Paris, not only as the inventor of a new style of picture, but also as the protagonist of a new mental attitude towards life and art. At that period there was a certain lassitude among the highly cultured, expressed by the term *fin de siècle*—and it was not difficult to make out a case for regarding modern civilisation as a disease. There is much in city life that is repugnant to some temperaments, and the yearning for simplicity among artists had its parallel in the "back-to-the-land" movement in politics. The argument put forward by a new generation of artists was this: "If modern life is diseased, modern art must be diseased also. We can only restore art to health by starting it afresh like children or savages." Thus began the reaction against the complexity of neo-Impressionist painting, and this movement, chiefly influenced by the example of Gauguin, gave birth to a group of painters known in Paris as the *fauves* (i.e. "the wild beasts"). This Fauvist movement was an extreme emotional reaction against the cold intellectual tendencies of hyperscientific painting. In so far as these "wild-beast" painters sought to make painting simpler and less complicated, it may be argued that they were moving in a right direction.

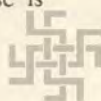




A similar reaction in England, fifty years earlier, had led Holman Hunt and Millais to go back to the painters before Raphael for qualities of line and colour which they thought desirable. But the French painters, in their rage against civilisation, went much further back : one by one all the Old Masters were swept away by revolutionaries who sought inspiration from the rudimentary art of savages and barbarians. Forcible, childlike scrawls began to appear in Paris exhibitions, and these paintings were based not so much on any new view of Nature as on the savage art of Polynesia and Central Africa. The rough-hewn intensity of negro carvings excited jaded minds which were satiated with the plastic perfection of the sculpture of Michael Angelo.

The passion for simplicity and the desire to secure a maximum of expression with a minimum of means—which are the chief virtues of the Fauves—are found in the highest degree in the work of Henri Matisse, who is generally regarded as the leading exponent of this school. Born in the North of France in 1869, Matisse as a young man made a great reputation among connoisseurs by the extraordinary power of his drawing. Beginning as an almost academic draughtsman, influenced at first by Impressionism and then by Gauguin, painting landscapes, figures, and still-life, the art of Matisse has passed through a number of phases, each of which has had offshoots in a band of imitators. If Gauguin has been the most lasting influence, Matisse is in no sense an imitator of this master. Though he retained the high-keyed Impressionist palette of bright, clean colours, Matisse abandoned the mosaic method of painting, using a sweeping brush and large planes of colour to fill in the masses of what are essentially linear designs. Many of his drawings are wonderful in their summary expression of form and movement, but while in his pictures we admire the masterly sureness and simplicity of his drawing, we are often bewildered by his wilful distortion of natural form.

One of his defenders has sought to explain that Matisse exaggerates deformity in a model by a temperamental necessity which pushes him to affirm a truth without discretion to the point of paradox. Most people will find it difficult to accept a passion for realism as a reasonable explanation why an artist should present the calf of a leg as having a greater circumference than a thigh ! On the other hand, decorative intent is patent in all the pictures of Matisse, and we frequently find that distortions of form are used to help and emphasise the rhythm and equilibrium of the linear pattern ; accordingly it seems more reasonable to conclude that these distortions are wilful, not accidental, and that the painter subordinates natural representation to formal design, and desires us to admire his pictures, not because they are “ true,” but because he has created a pattern of line and colour which should appeal to pure æsthetic sensibilities. Matisse is



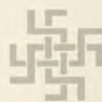




*E. Druet.*

**"HEAD OF A WOMAN," BY HENRI MATISSE**

Leader of a movement to simplify modern painting, Matisse in this striking picture secures a powerful effect with a rigid economy of means. A few heavy lines are sufficient to express a face which, whether we like it or not, we shall not easily forget.



historically important, therefore, as a pioneer of the doctrine that mere "actuality" is unimportant to pictorial art. He may also be regarded as the introducer of "shock tactics" into art. Even if we dislike his pictures, we find it difficult to forget them, because they make so forcible an impact on our vision. His "Head of a Woman" is an example of the powerful effect he achieves with the utmost simplicity and economy of means.

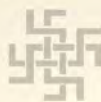
## § 3

If we look at the southern landscape by Cézanne we shall perceive that in his desire to make the objects look solid and enduring the artist has sharpened some curves into angles and emphasised cubic forms. This method of expressing the volume of objects was seen to be powerful and effective, and was seized upon by certain of the Fauves, who, desirous above all things of being forcible, elaborated their discovery into a dogma. Further, they supported their practice by a specious theory based on a smattering of science. We have seen how at the beginning of the present century there was a craze for the Primitive among a certain section of artists. These young men picked up from mineralogists the idea that the *crystal* was the *primitive form* of all things. A strange new test was applied to pictures: Did they or did they not show evidence of "crystallisation"? A phrase torn from a scientific handbook was adopted as an æsthetic watchword:

All *secondary* forms arise from the decrement of particles from the *edges* and *angles* of these primitive forms.

Therefore to restore natural objects and human beings to their "primitive" forms, it was necessary to eliminate all curved lines and to reconstruct forms and faces in their "primary" form, octahedron, dodecahedron, six-sided prism, or whatever other geometrical figure might be most suitable. Among the earliest pictures embodying this new doctrine were landscapes in which meadows were crumpled up into crisp, candy-like masses, and marines in which all the waves had a sharp edge. These pictures were the work of a young Frenchman named Georges Bracque; and it is still a matter for considerable argument whether Bracque or the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso is to be regarded as the true founder of Cubism.

Picasso was born at Malaga in 1881, and appeared in Paris about the end of the nineteenth century as an accomplished and masterly draughtsman. His early work "Mother and Child" shows the normality of his art and his genuine gifts before he attached himself definitely to the



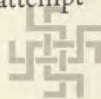


Fauviste movement. Possessed of the quick and fertile brain of an inventive engineer, Picasso poured forth in quick succession a number of paintings of startling novelty in a variety of styles before he reached the mode that is now known as Cubism. On his practice, the outcome of a restless search for novelty of effect and of tireless experiments in pattern-making, others built up a new pseudo-philosophy of art. As a theory Cubism was based on two dogmatic assertions and a fallacious conclusion. It was argued :

- (1) Strength is Beauty.
- (2) A straight line is stronger than a curved line.

It is hardly necessary to point out how faulty are both these contentions, for in the first place nothing is more beautiful or weaker than a flower, and in the second it is a commonplace of construction that an arch is stronger than a horizontal on two perpendiculars. Nevertheless, blind to the error of their major and minor premise, the Cubists with a parade of logic proceeded to the conclusion that a painting wholly composed of straight lines is stronger and therefore more beautiful than a painting containing curved lines. Picasso's "Head of a Lady in a Mantilla" illustrates the first phase of Cubism, in which the human body is cut up into geometrical forms. It is a "crystallisation" of a human head, which looks less like a painting than a wood-carving executed by a savage with a blunt instrument, yet once our eyes have grown accustomed to the strange barbarism of the technique we have to acknowledge that this head is not altogether wanting in expression.

The first phase of Cubism is simple in comparison with the second, for if the first consisted in cutting up natural objects into geometrical shapes, the second consisted in shuffling the pieces. This curious development, with which the name of Picasso is chiefly associated, professed to show, not merely one aspect of objects, but a number of sectional aspects seen from different standpoints and arbitrarily grouped together in one composition. By this method the painting of a simple object like a teacup is transfigured into an unrecognisable figure—consisting of fragments of the cup as seen from above, from the sides, and, as held up in the air, from below. These ingenious conglomerations, professing to give us "the greater reality" of things seen, leave us as bewildered, confused, and uninformed as a metaphysician's analysis of truth and error. As an example of the second phase of Cubism we give Picasso's "Portrait of M. Kahnweiler," in which all we can recognise are fragmentary frontal aspects of his waistcoat (with watch-chain), left eye, left ear, and one side of his nose drowned in a chaotic sea of various aspects of receipt-files and other unrecognisable objects. Thus a movement which originated in an attempt

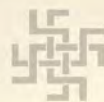




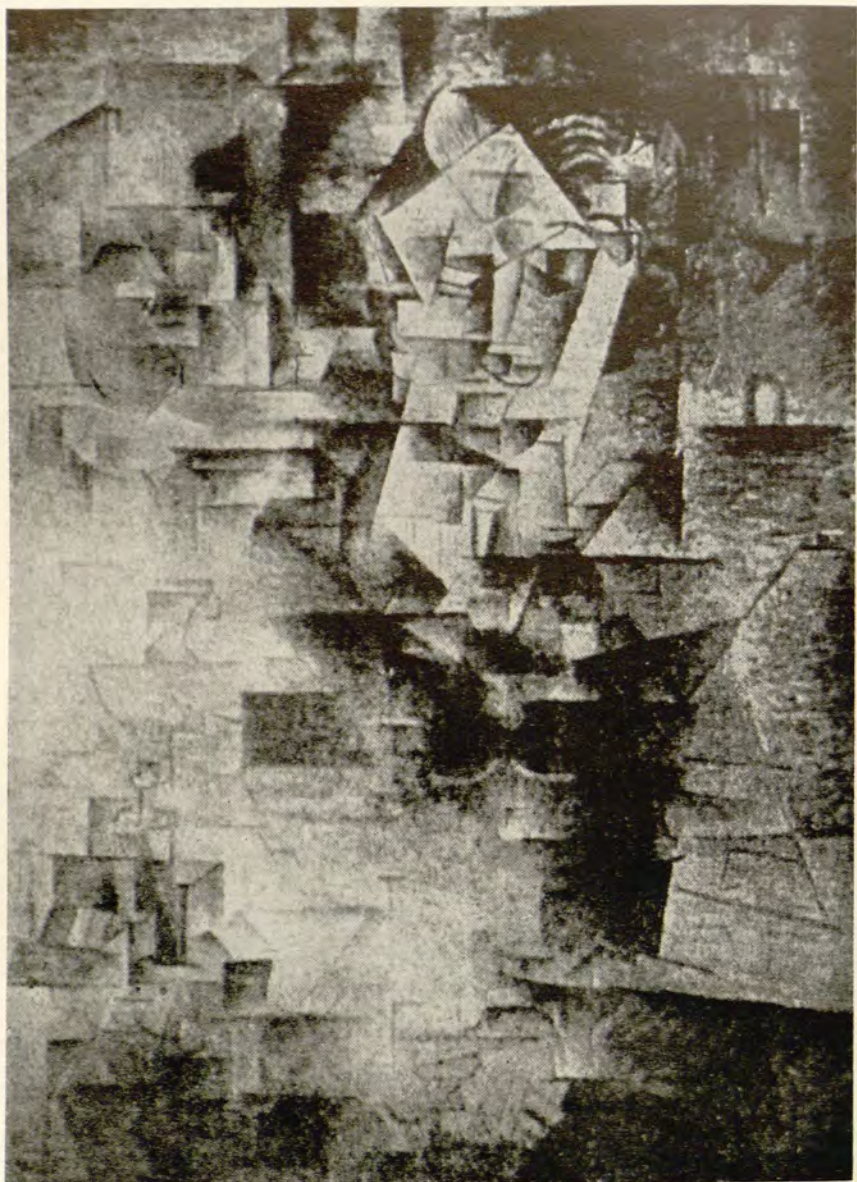
*E. Druet.*

**"HEAD OF A LADY IN A MANTILLA," BY PABLO PICASSO**

An example of the first phase of Cubism in which all curved lines are eliminated in order to give greater "strength" to a picture, and human features are consequently cut up into geometrical forms. Executed at a period when primitive and savage art was idolised by advanced artists, this head looks less like a painting than a wood figure carved by a savage with a blunt instrument.



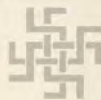




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"PORTRAIT OF M. KAHNWEILER," BY PABLO PICASSO

An example of the second phase of Cubism when, owing to the arbitrary shuffling of the geometrical shapes into which natural forms had already been cut up, only infinitesimal fragments of objects can be identified by the uninitiated. In this "puzzle-picture" a glimpse of a waistcoat with watch-chain can be seen in the centre, above it are indications of an eye, nose, and ear, but the rest of M. Kahnweiler appears to be smothered under the papers and files of his office.

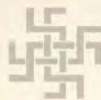


to secure a primitive simplicity was led astray by false doctrines, till it finally wandered into a blind alley of complexity, for the complications of neo-Impressionist painting were child's play in comparison with the entanglements of the puzzle-pictures of the later Cubists.

Following upon the distortions of Matisse and the strange pictures of the Cubists, in which the facts of vision were either ignored or so juggled with that they became incomprehensible, it is not surprising that yet another school of painters arose who abandoned representation as an indispensable element in picture-making and argued that painting should be as free as music to give emotional pleasure without any appeal to association of material ideas. This claim that painting should be abstract, and not concern itself with the concrete, was argued by the Polish artist Wassily Kandinsky, working at Munich in 1914, more convincingly in his book *The Art of Spiritual Harmony* than in his kaleidoscopic pictures. In theory it seems plausible enough that if a musician is free to weave melodies without reference to natural sounds, a painter should be free to construct compositions without reference to natural forms. It is also true that the emotional pleasure we derive from the stained-glass windows of an old cathedral does not depend on the subject painted. We are enchanted with the radiant beauty of the pattern of colour. So far so good, but now comes the point that no artist living or dead has yet succeeded in convincing the world that these stained-glass windows would give us any keener or purer emotional pleasure if they had no subject, nor has any artist been able himself to produce an abstract painting more beautiful in colour and pattern than paintings based on concrete forms.

Kandinsky, however, went a step further, and claimed that his abstract paintings were not mere dream-patterns, but had a meaning for the initiated in that they were based on the psychological effect on the observer of various lines and colours. But these effects are by no means definitely established, they are still a subject for speculation, and till they are fixed by the common consent of mankind, experiments in the "art of spiritual harmony" must necessarily be uncertain and inconclusive. Indeed, in Kandinsky's own "Compositions"—as his abstract paintings are entitled—outward and visible signs alone give us a clue to the inward and spiritual meaning, and it is by discerning faint traces of a gun-carriage, a puff of smoke, and falling houses in one of his pre-war pictures, painted in 1913, that we obtain a sense of that "clash and conflict of ideas in the spiritual world" that the painting is said to express.

The sectional representation of divers aspects of different objects was developed, with an added emphasis on the expression of movement, by the group of Italian painters known as the "Futurists." Futurism was a literary as well as an artistic movement, and it was largely a protest against







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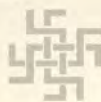
"A LADY AND HER DOG," BY GIACOMO BALLA

An example of a Futurist painting in which an endeavour is made to represent movement by showing in various positions the moving paws and tail of the dog, the swing of his chain, and the step of his owner's feet. Here painting attempts to rival and surpass the achievements of the rapid-motion camera.



the tyranny of the past on the part of ardent nationalists, who resented that the present achievements of their country should be obscured by the glory of its past. The leader of the movement was a writer, Signor Marinetti, and his skilled pen justified the extraordinary practices of his artist friends by sonorous phrases. A pictorial record of the commonplace fact that the seat of a chair is visible after the sitter has got up and walked away, was majestically alluded to as an example of "the plastic interpenetration of matter." As regards colour, the Futurists accepted the divisionism and complementarism of the neo-Impressionists, but in the rendering of form they sought to introduce new principles: "Universal dynamism must be rendered in painting as a dynamic sensation; movement and light destroy the materiality of bodies." An amusing example of the "dynamic decomposition of matter" is Giacomo Balla's painting "A Lady and her Dog," which may be regarded as a synthesis of rapid-motion photography. A multiplicity of paws and tails indicates that the animal is trotting with wagging tail, four ghostly chains suggest the whirling of his lead, and an army of shoes presents the movement of his owner's feet. In concentrating their endeavours on the expression of movement, the Futurists attempted to convert painting from an art of space to an art of time. Their daring experiments have produced few pictures likely to stand the test of time, but possibly an exception may be made for Signor Balla's "Centrifugal Force." This painting of revolving spheres shooting forth golden sparks into an azure void was not only decorative in design and colour, but also nobly expressive of the Force that shoots meteorolites through the universe. An abstract painting that succeeds in expressing an abstract idea is clearly legitimate art, but pictures of this calibre are unfortunately the exception among abstract paintings.

Nevertheless it would be wrong to assert that the experiments of the modern extremists in painting have been wholly valueless. Technically they have widened the horizon of painting and opened the road to a new Realism in which the firm structure and rigid design of the Cubists can be combined with a truth and beauty of colour derived from the Impressionists. Psychologically their work is of profound interest to every student of history. Coming events cast their shadow before them on the field of art. The patient reader who has followed this history thus far will have observed the increasing endeavour on the part of painters to give an expression of Strength. In examining their works he will have noticed that, however greatly they may vary in their aspects and styles, nearly all of them contain an element of Violence. These Fauviste, Cubist, and Futurist paintings never soothe us to rest; they aim at galvanising us into action. All of them must be regarded as symptoms, as expressions in art of the unrest, agitation, and suppressed violence seething subterraneously in Europe prior

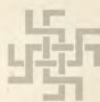




to the outbreak of the first World War. The effect of the war on art will be considered in another chapter, but long before August 1914 premonition of the coming hostilities were given in the tumult of modern painting.

The important thing to remember, however, with all modern experimental art is that it no longer depicts something *seen by the eye* at one moment of time but something *conceived in the mind*, where—as we know from our dreams—neither time nor space are rigid. Cézanne's intellectual concepts about the geometrical solids underlying all natural appearances; Van Gogh's introduction of emotional values which could be emphasised at the expense of outward form and colour; Gauguin's movement towards primitive simplification: all these were the beginning, though these three still based their pictures to some extent on the appearance of things in Nature. Each proved an opening to the newer theories of the purposes of art. Form for form's sake; emotion for emotion's sake; the primitive as an ultimate simplification. These elements, pure or intermingled, will be found as the basis of practically all contemporary art.

It is fascinating to realise that the whole movement of thought in the twentieth century has been towards a greater subjectivity than prevailed during the materialistic nineteenth; and art reflects this. Freud has tremendously stimulated our interest in the subconscious and the irrational; the scientists and physicists have come near to dissolving all matter into energy and motion. Modern art must be seen in the light of such movements of human thought. Thus it was not only an underlying violence and revolt, but a growing anti-materialism which was the ferment in the new art.

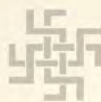


## ART DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A SURVEY OF THE WORK OF OFFICIAL WAR ARTISTS AND OTHERS

## § I

IT was shown in the previous chapter how at the beginning of the present century the art world was deluged with theories and "isms," while several of the pictures illustrated afforded evidence that a sinister violence and subterranean unrest became manifest in European painting before it exploded in European politics and precipitated a great war. On the Continent—and to a slighter extent in England also—the "wild-men" of painting had betrayed in form and colour that spirit of merciless aggression which eventually provoked Armageddon. The principal British contribution to the extreme left of modern painting was a development of Cubism known as "Vorticism," and it is not altogether without significance that the leader of this movement, P. Wyndham Lewis, should have begun in the early spring of 1914 a series of abstract paintings with titles taken from military text-books. His "Plan of Campaign," exhibited at London in June 1914, was based not on any vision of landscape and figures, but on such a diagram of a battle disposition as we may find in any history book. The parallel lines and blocks stand for the divisions of contending forces, and the heavy blocks in the upper right-hand corner are supposed to represent the extended left wing of one army outflanking and falling with superior strength on the right wing of the other army. This is the "plan of campaign." Here again we have a curious premonition of the war expressed in paint. The case of Wyndham Lewis typifies the general effect the 1914-18 war had on art. When a student at the Slade School Lewis was already remarkable for the uncommon power of his drawing. Caught up in the vortex which swept so many ambitious young artists into the whirlpool of "abstract painting," because of their desire to attain novelty at all costs, Lewis was led in the years immediately preceding the 1914-18 war to paint "abstract" pictures, incomprehensible to the multitude and difficult for even the initiated to understand. Then in 1918, after two years' experience with the heavy artillery in France, he returned to London and returned to realism. "The Gun



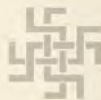


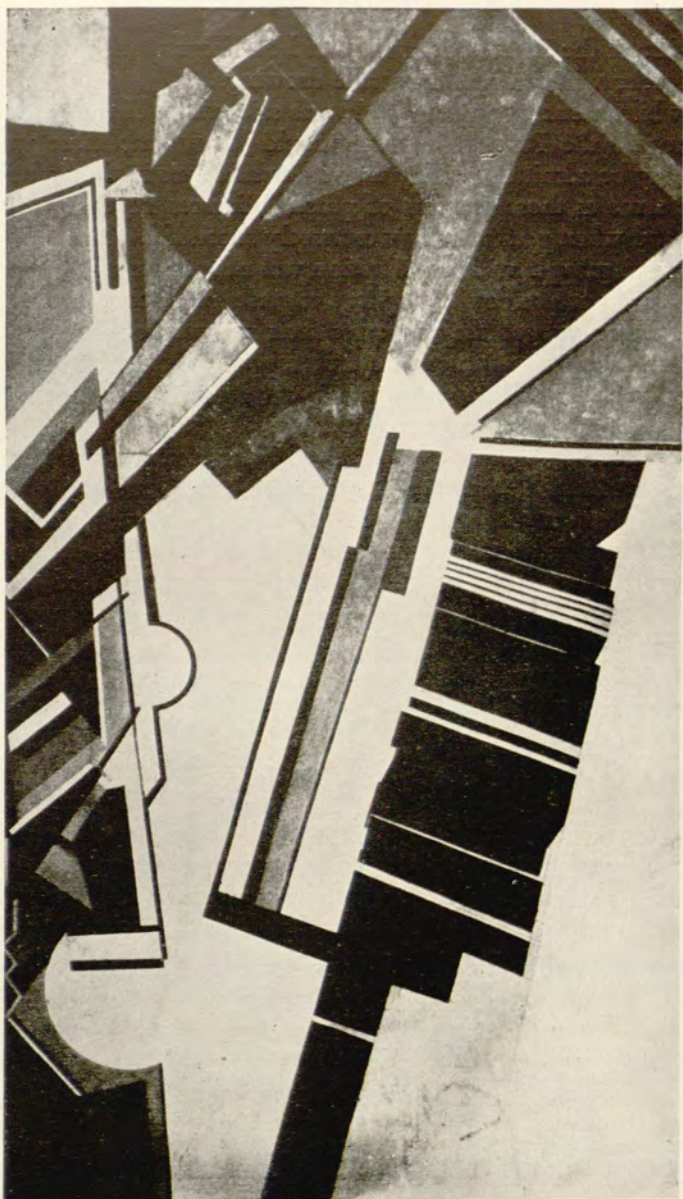
Pit," which he painted for the Canadian War Memorials, was no abstract picture, but a perfectly comprehensible painting based on vision, on his remembered experience with the big guns and of the big-built men who worked them.

The chief effect of the 1914-18 war on painting, therefore, was to bring about a return to realism, but it was a new realism modified, as we shall see, by certain principles derived from movements which, in themselves, appeared to be extravagant. Not only did the war restore to sanity many of the most promising of the younger artists, it also prepared the public to accept and understand their works. Youthful artists, who in peace-time might have waited till middle age before their talent was recognised, became famous in a year or two. The wall of prejudice was broken down by the unparalleled upheaval of our normal world, so that even conservative minds were ready to consider impartially a new vision of new events. Further, though there was no slackness on the part of the younger artists in joining the colours, the artistic activity of Great Britain may be said to have reached its zenith during the years of the 1914-18 war. Never before had so much official and State patronage been given to British artists; never before did the British public so clearly recognise that picture-making was not a mere pastime but an activity which had its own function and purpose of usefulness to humanity.

As early as 1914-15 the first public recognition of the artist's value to the State in war-time came in connection with the recruiting campaign. "Art for art's sake" was dead and done with, but in its place was substituted a new gospel of "Art for the Idea's sake." Art was recognised as an element of education and social progress, because nothing else in the world could impress an idea so vividly and lastingly on the human memory. During the first winter and spring of the first World War nearly a hundred posters were commissioned from various artists by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, and 2,500,000 copies of these posters were distributed throughout the United Kingdom. In addition to these official posters, generous contributions were made to the campaign by several private firms. The recruiting posters issued by the London Electric Railways will be long remembered for their efficiency and artistic qualities, notably Frank Brangwyn's "Remember Belgium" and G. Spencer Pryse's "The Only Road for an Englishman." Later, the use as a poster during the War Savings Campaign of a reproduction of Whistler's portrait of his Mother (see page 645)—as a gentle reminder that "Old Age Must Come"—was significant of a growing belief on the part of Authority that the most artistic picture can make the widest public appeal.

Simultaneously with the appearance of the recruiting posters on the hoardings, came the war cartoons in the newspapers. It is impracticable

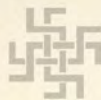




"PLAN OF CAMPAIGN," BY P. WYNDHAM LEWIS

A curious premonition of the first World War, this painting—exhibited at London in June 1914—is based on the diagram of a battle disposition which we may see in any history book. The parallel lines and blocks stand for divisions of contending forces, and the heavy blocks in the upper right-hand corner are supposed to represent the superior forces of one army turning and crushing the right wing of the other.

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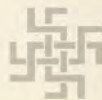
to give a list of the British artists who did excellent work in this direction—every reader will remember notable drawings.

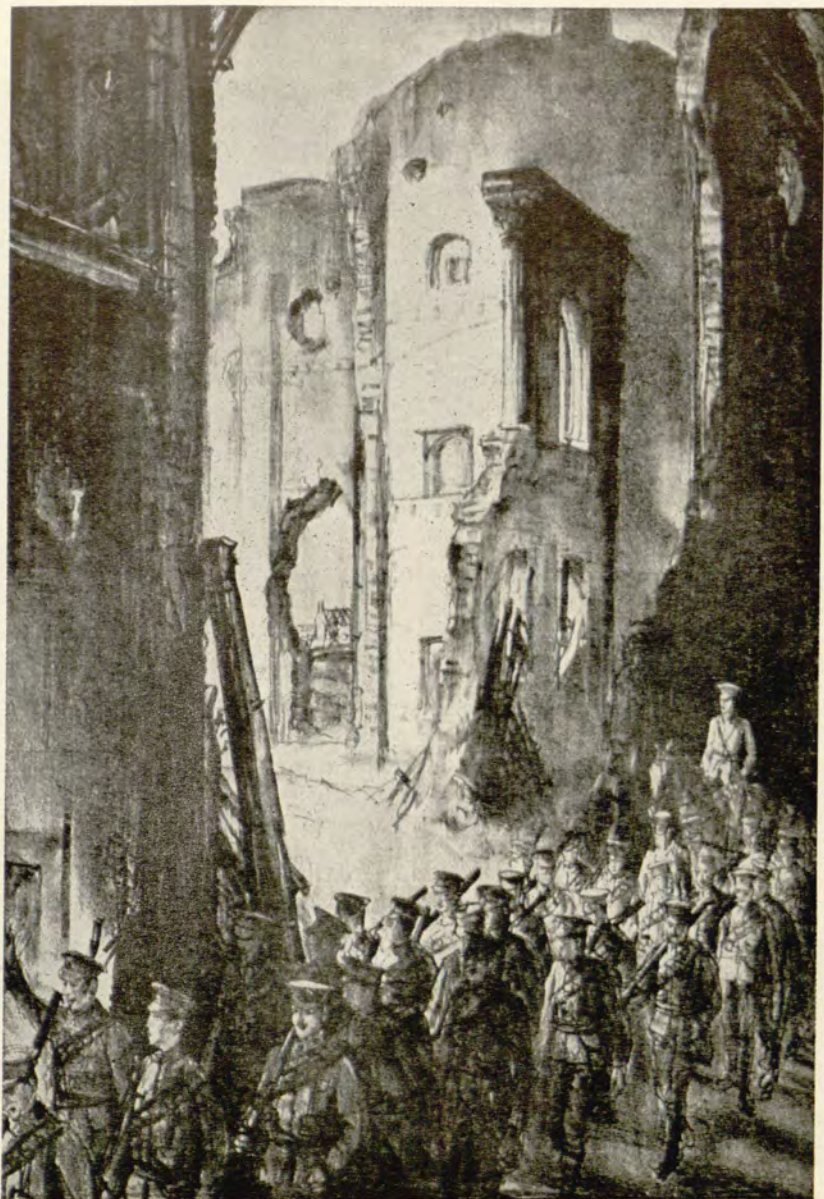
Meanwhile, what of painting? It was said rather bitterly in 1916 that “no visitor to the Royal Academy would know that there was a war on.” It may be admitted frankly that the exhibitions in these years looked much the same as those in years of peace. Pictures of the war were infrequent, and when present they were rarely successful. The failure of the older artists to grapple with the situation was neither surprising nor shameful. They did not possess the requisite experience. Some endeavoured to be topical, and envisaged the war after their memory of Crimean pictures, changing the uniforms into khaki but repeating the old arrangements. But sword-waving officers, swaggering cavalrymen, and neatly brushed infantry were no longer convincing even to civilians. Standing before an Academy picture of a charge, a wounded New Zealander was overheard to remark: “That’s absurd! one man with a machine-gun would wipe out the lot.” New methods of warfare demanded new methods of painting for their efficient expression. The battle in art, as at the Front, was for the young, and the first man to capture the imagination of London by his war pictures was a young artist hitherto practically unknown.

## § 2

Before 1914 Christopher R. W. Nevinson was only known to the few as a young artist of promise. After studying at the Slade School of Art, he had formed ties of friendship in Paris with the Italian artist Gino Severini, and so had become influenced by Futurism. He was also interested in Cubism, and though he never definitely adhered to “Vorticism,” he exhibited on one occasion with Wyndham Lewis, Edward Wadsworth, William Roberts, and other Vorticists. During the early stage of the war Nevinson was driving a motor-ambulance behind the Belgian Front, and being invalided with rheumatic fever early in 1915 he was able to resume painting during his convalescence. Thus he was practically the first artist who had the opportunity to exhibit in London pictures of the war based on personal experience of the realities of modern fighting. It was in the spring of 1915 that Nevinson showed his first three war pictures in the exhibition of the London Group at the Goupil Gallery, and though these betrayed Futurist and Cubist influence, they were perfectly intelligible as illustrations of actual incidents.

Dr. Johnson maintained that there was some good to be got out of every book, and similarly it may be argued that there is some good to be got out of every artistic theory. It was the peculiar distinction of

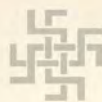




*Reproduced by permission of the London Passenger Transport Board.*

**'THE ONLY ROAD FOR AN ENGLISHMAN,' BY G. SPENCER PRYSE**

Still remembered for its effectiveness during the Recruiting Campaign of 1914-15, this poster with its dignified design and noble appeal, shows how vividly art can be used to implant an idea in our minds.







*Reproduced by permission of the Artist.*

“LA PATRIE,” BY C. R. W. NEVINSON,

An intensely tragic vision of “the broken debris of the war-machine.” The treatment of the figures shows a modified use of the Cubist method, which is helpful here as an indication that “war is a process in which man is not treated as a human being but as an item in a great instrument of destruction.”

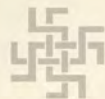




*Reproduced by permission of the London Passenger Transport Board.*

**"REMEMBER BELGIUM," BY FRANK BRANGWYN,**

This striking poster was specially drawn by Frank Brangwyn for the famous series of artistic recruiting appeals issued by the London Electric Railways.





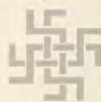
Nevinson to leave aside all the extravagances of Futurism and Cubism, and snatch from them the two things which helped him to render realistically a new world in a new way. The particular good thing in the work of the Italian Futurists was their successful suggestion of movement. By a generous use of slanting lines in the composition, Nevinson gave a vivid sense of movement and life to his early painting "Returning to the Trenches." His French soldiers, with packs on their backs, their bodies and rifles sloping in the direction in which they were marching, were not portrayed as they would be shown in a photograph: the aim here was not to portray a group of individual soldiers, but to express the onward rush of an advancing army, and this impression was vividly and irresistibly conveyed. Further, the use of straight lines and avoidance of curves—characteristics derived from Cubism—suggested that the movement was that of a vast machine rather than of a collection of human beings.

The distinguished art critic, A. Clutton Brock, has pointed out in one of his essays that for fifty years or more a belief has been growing on us that man is a machine and "should be conscious of the fact that he is one." The popular play "R.U.R." was an expression of this consciousness in dramatic form; in painting it was confessed by the Cubist method which, as Clutton Brock has said,

does express, in the most direct way, the sense that in war man behaves like a machine or part of a machine, that war is a process in which man is not treated as a human being but as an item in a great instrument of destruction, in which he ceases to be a person and is lost in a process. The cubist method, with its repetition and sharp distinction of planes, expresses this sense of a mechanical process better than any other way of representation.

Familiarity with the working of the "war-machine" prepared the mind of the public to accept that vision of the world as a complicated piece of mechanism which is the essence both of Cubism and Futurism. The first World War offered to the Cubists one of the few subjects which their technique was fitted to express, and the marvel is that this opportunity, missed by the French and Italian inventors of the new method, was seized upon with conspicuous success by a handful of almost unknown British artists.

From the first Nevinson stood out from all previous painters of war by reason of his power in suggesting movement, and the implication in his pictures that modern war was not the affair of human individuals but the creaking progress of a complicated machine. His remarkable painting of the interior of a hospital, "La Patrie," which was purchased by Mr. Arnold Bennett, is tragical in its intensity, but it is the tragedy of automata crushed and mangled in the revolutions of a pitiless machine.



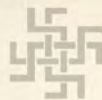


*W. F. Mansell.*

"THE ROAD FROM ARRAS TO BAPAUME," BY C. R. W. NEVINSON,

From the Painting in the Imperial War Museum

The son of a famous war-correspondent, Nevinson was the first artist to make a reputation by his original and intense interpretation of scenes on the battlefields. This painting of a road familiar to thousands of British soldiers is a typical example of his later pictures of the Great War, in which mannerisms and inessential details have alike been suppressed, and the main characteristics of the remembered scene are stated with emphatic simplicity and clearness.



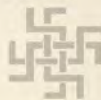


Other artists have painted the interiors of base-hospitals, pictures of men bandaged but smiling, and attended by a bevy of comely nurses, so that the spectator might imagine it was rather pleasant than otherwise to be wounded ; but Nevinson permits no falsifying of the facts ; he shows us the reality of the thing, the broken debris of the war-machine, the pain and the suffering and, above all, the relative insignificance of the individual pawn in this mighty war-game.

The versatility of Nevinson and the way in which he alters his style to suit his subject is seen in "A Group of Soldiers." The great truth about the English "Tommy" after 1915 was that he was the British working-man in disguise, and here with unerring accuracy Nevinson has penetrated to the man behind the uniform, and unveiled the man of toil, the unit of the machine. Some have demurred that in the foremost figures the hands are exaggerated, but while the point is open to debate, a slight exaggeration is permissible as emphasising the fact that these men belong to the horny-handed class. In this group, where there is no movement to be registered, Futurist devices would be out of place and they are avoided, but there is still a faint trace of Cubism in the definite angles of the simple modelling, and this helps to give a monumental sense of strength and doggedness to the sturdy figures.

In landscape, as well as in his figure paintings, Nevinson contrived to get at the reality behind the thing seen. "The Road from Arras to Bapaume" is neither impressionistic nor photographic, but it gives the essential truth of a scene acutely remembered. All the inessential details have been suppressed, with the result that the main recollections of the truth—the white, switchback track of Roman straightness, the lopped-down tree-trunks, the stream of moving traffic, and the limitless expanse—are recorded with increased strength and intensity. This is one of Nevinson's later pictures of the war, and while he no doubt enjoyed greater facilities and privileges when he returned to France in 1917 as an "official artist" than he had done in 1914-15 as a motor-mechanic, the essential qualities in his pictures remained the same. His reputation was made with the earlier pictures, in which the mannerisms were most marked ; in the later works these mannerisms were pruned to a vanishing point, and realities were stated without any serious loss in strength and with increased clarity.

It is no wonder that the war-pictures of Nevinson took London by storm in the early days of the war. He was the first to show the grim inner realities of modern fighting, and others who dealt only with appearances seemed in comparison remote from the heart of the subject. When other young artists were released from the fighting line, a new series of visions of men as automata expressed the new outlook of a new generation,



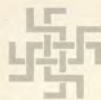


*Reproduced by permission of the Artist.*

**"A GROUP OF SOLDIERS," BY C. R. W. NEVINSON,**

From the Painting in the Imperial War Museum

After 1915 the British soldier was the British workman in disguise. In the above picture the artist has unveiled the man behind the uniform and expressed this truth with convincing simplicity and force. Faint traces of Cubism, revealed in the definite angles of the modelled forms, help to give strength and doggedness in the sturdy figures.



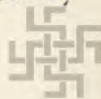


but their work did not begin to appear in exhibitions till nearing the time of the Armistice in 1918.

The first serious rival to Nevinson appeared in April 1916, when a large painting, "The Kensingtons at Laventie," by Eric H. Kennington, was exhibited in Regent Street. Kennington, a young painter of promise in whom William Nicholson had taken an interest, was an artist of quite another type. He was untouched by the most modern movements, except that he had a leaning towards simplicity of drawing and emphasis of design: this, together with a knowledge of the war from within, was all he had in common with Nevinson. After only three months' training in England as a Territorial, Private Kennington went to France at the beginning of November 1914 with the 13th Battalion of the London Regiment ("The Kensingtons"). He returned to England in 1915, when he was discharged unfit for further service, and then began to paint this great picture of a typical moment in the life at the Front during the terrible winter of 1914-15. The moment chosen for representation in this picture was when his platoon, after serving for four days and nights in the fire trenches, enduring the piercing cold of twenty degrees of frost and almost continuous snow, had at last been relieved. The men have emerged from the communication trench terminating in a ruined farmyard, and are forming up along the ruined village street. Each figure in the picture is an actual portrait, and the artist has given the following description of his work:

Corporal J. Kealey is about to give the order, "Fall in, No. 7 Platoon." . . . In the first four—reading from right to left—are Pte. Slade, resting with both hands on his rifle; Lce.-Cpl. Wilson, Pte. Guy, and Pte. McCafferty, who is turning to look at the other men falling in behind. . . . On the extreme left is Pte. H. Bristol. . . . Directly behind Pte. Guy are two men in waterproof sheets: Pte. Kennington [the artist] in a blue trench helmet and Pte. W. Harvey. . . . On the ground is Pte. A. Todd. . . . He has fallen exhausted by continual sickness, hard work, lack of sleep, long hours of "standing-to," and observing.

This picture shows quite another aspect of realism. It is a stately presentation of human endurance, of the quiet heroism of the rank and file. The deadliest enemy here is the piercing cold, which seems to pervade the whole picture. Apart from its human emotional appeal, this large picture—in which the figures are two-thirds life-size—possesses a peculiar technical interest in that it is painted on glass. The advantage of this method is that the pigment is hermetically sealed, and so long as the thick plate-glass endures unbroken the colour of the surface will remain for centuries as fresh as on the day when it was painted. The technical difficulties, however, will be apparent even to laymen when it is realised that in order to use this method the whole picture has to be painted backward. Not only





*By permission of the Artist and Lady Cowdray.*

**"THE KENSINGTONS AT LAVENTIE," BY ERIC H. KENNINGTON**

This picture presents a typical moment in the life at the Front during the terrible winter of 1914-15. After enduring twenty degrees of frost in the trenches for four days and nights, these Territorials have been relieved and are now forming up in a ruined farmyard outside the communication trench. Each figure in the picture is an actual portrait.

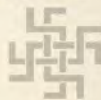


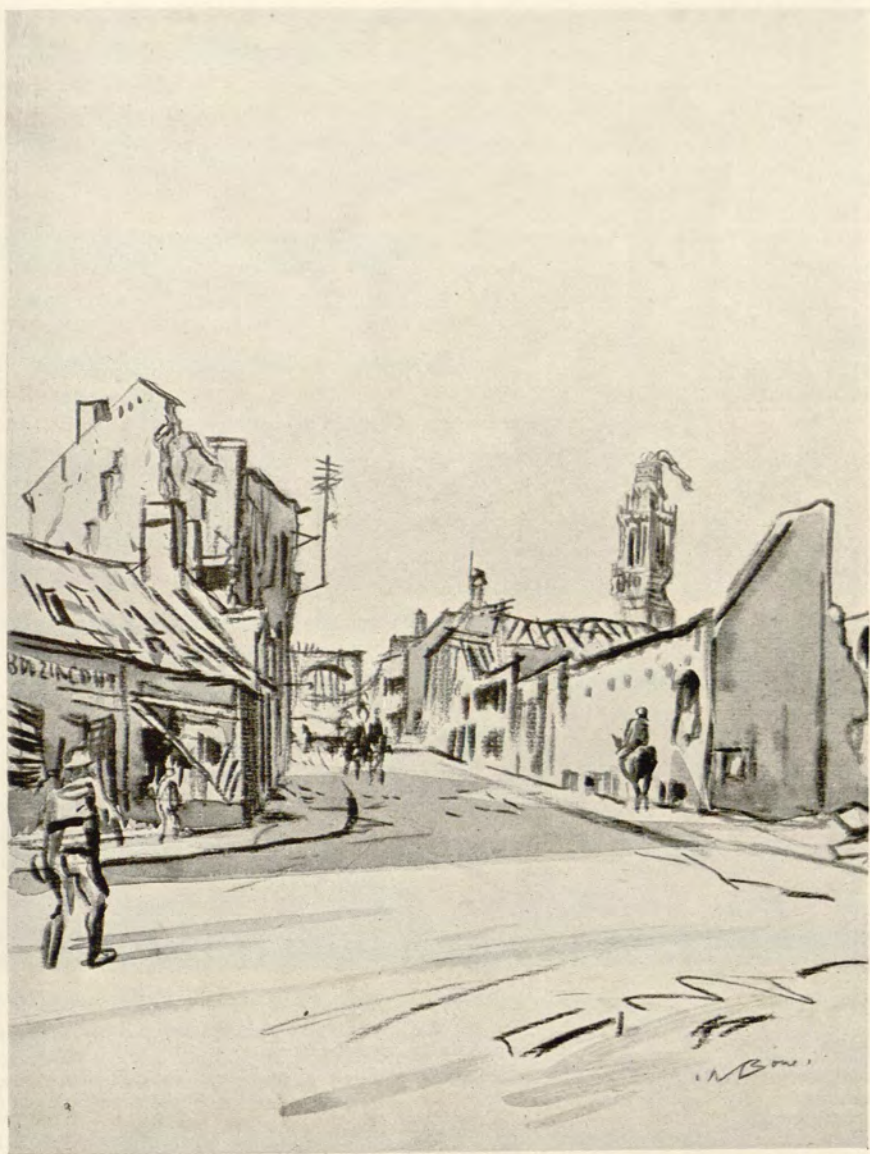
has the subject to be reversed on the other side of the glass, but the process of painting has to be reversed also : the upper touches, which on a canvas would have been the last, must be laid first on the glass, and what would have been the first brush-stroke on a canvas must be put on the glass last. Looking at the apparent ease with which the whole picture has been painted, and remembering the infinite difficulties of the method employed, "The Kensingtons at Laventie" must be pronounced a great technical achievement as well as a noble memorial of British fortitude.

## § 3

"Often," says a character in one of Sudermann's novels, "Art leads us astray because she has deliberately tried to reflect something quite different from the spirit of her time." Many visitors to the Royal Academy and other exhibitions in 1915 and 1916 felt vaguely that the pictures they saw there were leading them astray. Eric Kennington's picture and the paintings of Nevinson acted on them differently, because these seemed truer to the spirit of the time. The outworn conventions of the older artists seemed powerless to convey an adequate expression of the clash of the world conflict, and possibly it was the general failure of well-known and eminent painters to deal with the 1914-18 war that led the British Government to select a black-and-white artist as the first "Official Artist." In addition to the useful propaganda work accomplished by poster-artists and cartoonists, it was felt that the nation should possess permanent records of typical scenes and episodes in the greatest war the world had ever known. The outcome of this feeling was the appointment in August, 1916, of Muirhead Bone as an official artist on the Western Front. The appointment was eminently appropriate, for this artist's known ability to make memorable designs from scaffolding and the demolition of buildings argued that he was the right man to depict the havoc of war.

Born at Glasgow in 1867, Muirhead Bone came to London in 1901, and was a prominent member of the New English Art Club long before the war. His masterly etchings and drawings of architectural subjects have long been highly prized by connoisseurs. In 1915-16 Muirhead Bone had devoted much of his time to the interpretation of British war industries, sketching "The Building of a Liner," "The Yards on the Clyde," and similar subjects. After his new appointment the regular publication in parts, from the Office of *Country Life*, of reproductions of Muirhead Bone's drawings made on the Western Front, opened a new era in the pictorial treatment of the war. Drawings like the "Sketch in Albert" show with what economy and distinction this artist achieved





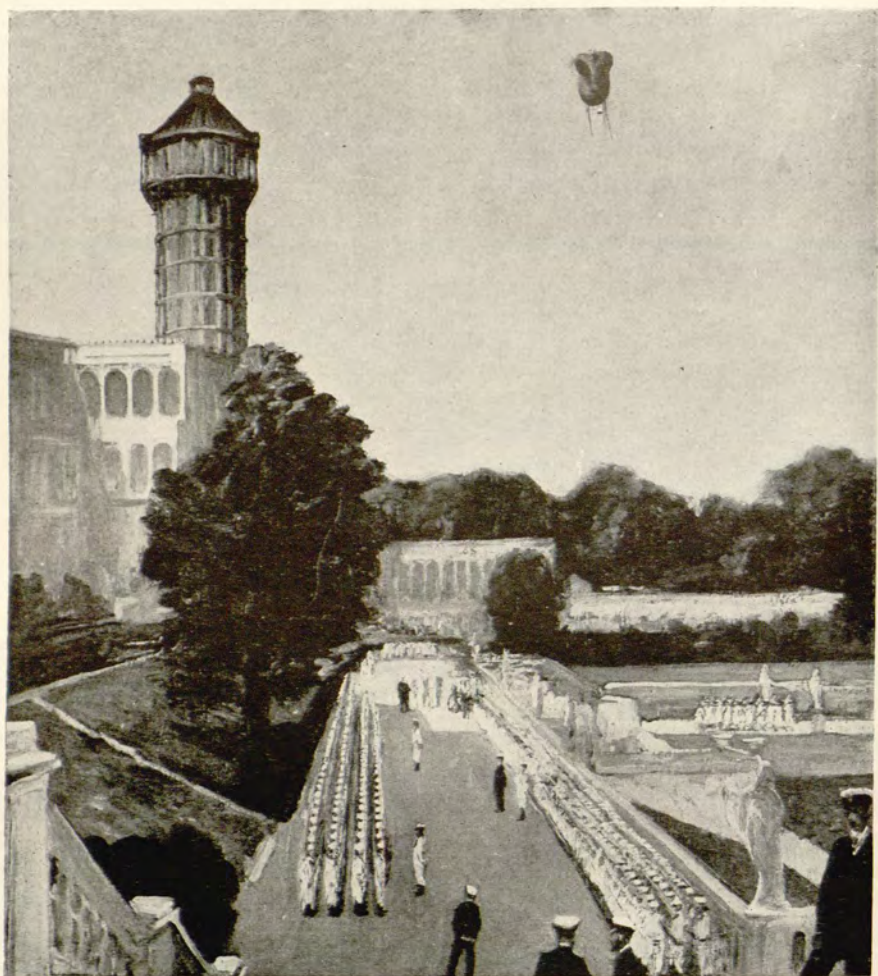
*Reproduced by permission of the Artist.*

**"A SKETCH IN ALBERT," BY MUIRHEAD BONE**

A drawing made on the spot by the first "Official Artist" sent by the British Government to the Western Front in the first World War. Muirhead Bone gives a vivid impression here of the ravaged state of this Belgian town, and invests its ruin with a dignity of his own.





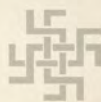


*Reproduced by permission of the Artist.*

**"R.N.D., CRYSTAL PALACE," BY JOHN LAVERY,**

From the Painting in the Imperial Museum

An impression of the Royal Naval Division lined up on parade in the grounds of the Crystal Palace, by an artist who is equally adept in the deft sketching of a passing pageant or in the portraiture of a society beauty.



his task of presenting with pictorial dignity and actual truth the aspect of ravaged buildings and wasted landscape. Though Muirhead Bone's reputation was made before the war, these portfolios increased his admirers a hundredfold, and the unexpected popularity and wide demand for his books of sketches soon convinced the authorities that there was room and to spare for other official artists.

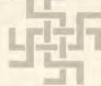
In April 1917 James McBey, another Scottish artist, born in Aberdeenshire in 1883, who was akin in style to Bone, and also chiefly known for his etchings and drawings, was appointed the Official Artist for Egypt and Palestine. The same month William Orpen, R.A., was sent to France as an official artist. A large collection of the paintings he made there was freely presented by the artist to the nation and they are now in the possession of the Imperial War Museum.

#### § 4

Some two months after these last appointments, a small collection of water-colours of "The Ypres Salient" was exhibited at the Goupil Gallery. They were the work of a young soldier, Paul Nash, who then was practically unknown, though he and his brother John Nash had already exhibited at the New English Art Club water-colours which had attracted attention among connoisseurs by reason of their unsophisticated simplicity and naïve charm. Though enthusiastically welcomed by some of the leading art-critics, Nash's first exhibition passed almost unnoticed by the public, but a second exhibition of his war-drawings, held later at the Leicester Galleries, aroused widespread interest, and the publication by *Country Life* of a book of his water-colours established his reputation as an original artist who had and could express poignantly his own vision of the war. In the introduction to this volume of reproductions, C. E. Montague wrote :

In drawing strange places so strangely, Mr. Nash contrives to bring back to the mind the strange things felt by men who were there at moments of stress. One does not see with the eyes alone, but with brain and nerves too, and if these are worked upon in unusual ways, then the messages brought in by the little waves of light that break on delicate shores in the eye are changed—some may say disturbed or blurred; others may say refined into an uncommon rightness, not to be had at other times. If an artist succeeds in expressing effects of such changes, his work may well delight some of those who have felt the changes go on in themselves.

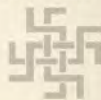
A picture like "Sunrise : Inverness Copse" may not be "true" as the camera sees truth; but it is true to the memory of a nerve-racked





fighting-man. Granted that it contain exaggerations, they are exaggerations of significant elements in the scene. The lumps and holes in the foreground are a pointed commentary on the deeply pit-marked earth exposed to constant shelling. Paul Nash painted his subjects as seen by the mind's eye, and the mind of man ever enlarges that which it has cause to fear. A sensitive and emotional artist, Nash painted in these water-colours not only what he had seen, but what he had *felt*. As a landscape painter, what he felt most deeply was the abomination of desolation caused by war. Whereas Nevinson showed us soldiers as cogs in the war-machine, Nash presented the Earth as a tortured and violated entity. These two painters, the first realist, the second imaginative, each formed and inspired by the 1914-18 war, were the complement of each other. Nevinson showed the complicated, man-driven machinery of war; Nash its devastating effects. Many other artists of great skill and talent painted pictures of the war which were perhaps more pleasant to look upon; but none exhibited its inner ghastliness with more power, originality, and intensity of feeling. By midsummer 1917 the best judges of modern painting were convinced that the two men who had most to say about the war in paint were C. R. W. Nevinson and Paul Nash. Representations were made to the proper authorities, with the result that during the next few months a new batch of "Official Artists" included C. R. W. Nevinson, Paul Nash, Eric Kennington, and John Lavery. As became his age and position, John Lavery—who was born at Belfast in 1857—was enlisted, so to speak, for "home service." "The Royal Naval Division, Crystal Palace, 1916" is an excellent example of the war-pictures—charming in their delicate colour and atmosphere—which Lavery was able to paint without crossing the seas. Happy in its Whistlerian Impressionism, in which this artist was an adept, this picture is entirely worthy of the reputation of one of our leading portrait painters, but it is no new revelation either of the spirit of the times or of the significance of war.

The artistic activity of Great Britain was at its height in 1917. In March the Imperial War Museum was instituted, and during the summer the Canadian War Memorials Fund was founded by Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere, who, acting under competent expert advice, accumulated a notable collection of pictures. When the collection was exhibited at Burlington House, prior to its dispatch to Canada, the work of the younger artists revealed to a significant degree the new spirit that was abroad in art. Nevinson and Nash were no longer alone; other artists of their own generation exhibited war-pictures in which similar tendencies could be discerned. Conspicuous among those who stressed the Cubist point of view, presenting soldiers as automata and emphasising the mechanism of war, were P. Wyndham Lewis and William Roberts; still





“SUNRISE : INVERNESS COPSE,” BY PAUL NASH

From the painting in the Imperial War Museum

“In drawing strange places so strangely Nash contrives to bring back to the mind the strange things felt by men who were there at moments of stress.” In this picture of a wood after being exposed to constant shelling, a landscape painter imaginatively expresses his horror at the way in which war distorts and devastates a peaceful scene.





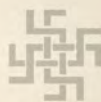
*Reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Manchester.*

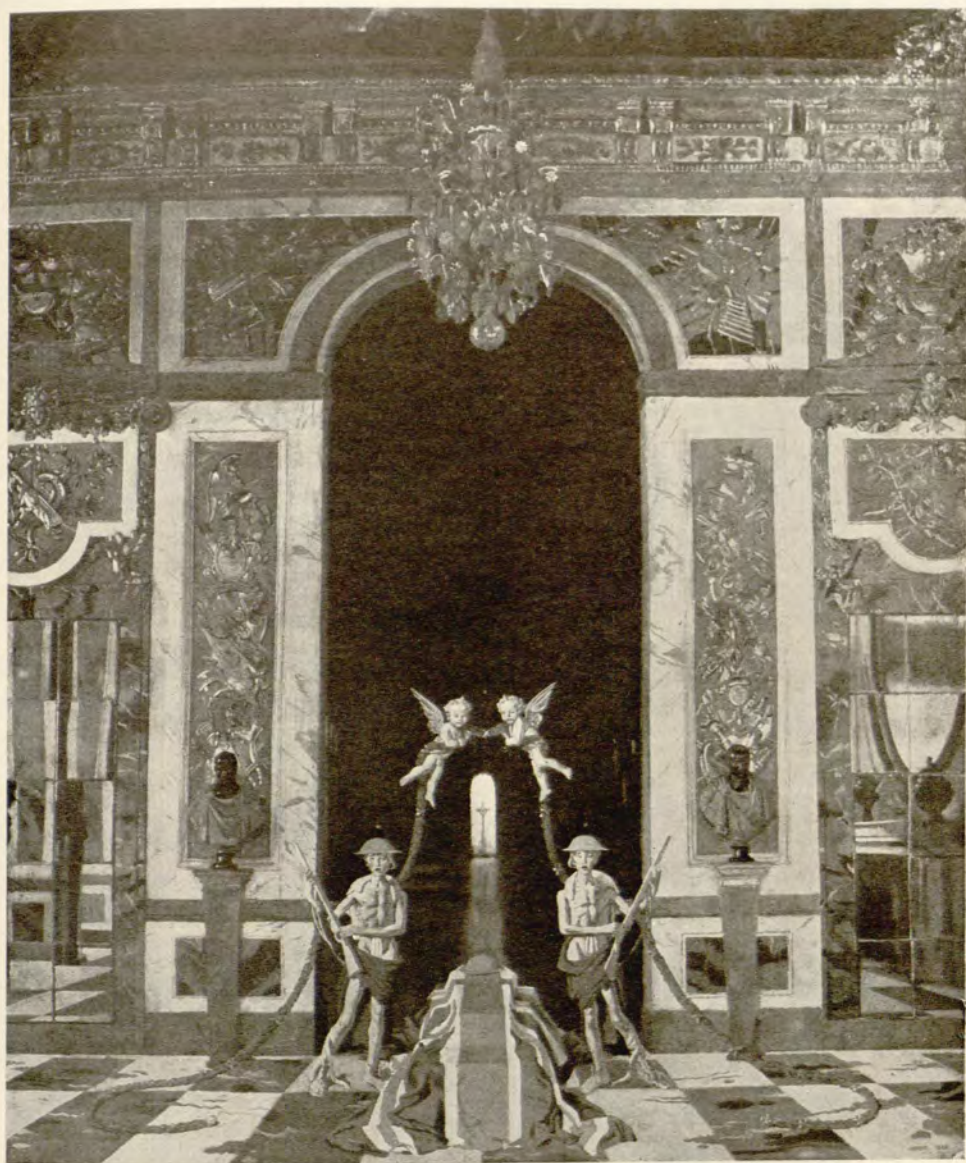
**"ADVANCED DRESSING STATION ON THE STRUMA, 1916,"**

**BY HENRY LAMB,**

City Art Gallery, Manchester

The artist, who served in Macedonia with the Red Cross, shows another aspect of war in this picture of a dressing station behind the firing-line. Clear in every detail, natural yet delicately balanced in design, the work as a whole is wonderfully eloquent of the weariness and boredom felt in this quiet moment when the men are waiting for the wounded to arrive.

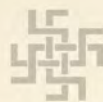




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**"TO THE UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER IN FRANCE," BY WILLIAM ORPEN**

This painting, the "picture of the year" in the Royal Academy of 1923, was the artist's tribute to the Unknown Soldier. The gilded pomp of the Palace of Versailles, where the Peace Treaty was signed, is imaginatively contrasted with the ragged misery of the ghostly boy-soldiers who watch over the coffin of their comrade. Festooned Cupids and the Cross shining in the distance are symbols of the "Greater Love" of those who have laid down their lives. Scrupulous fidelity to reality and high powers of imagination are shown in this much-discussed picture.



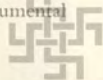




"THE UNDERGROUND," BY WALTER BAYES

From the painting in the Imperial War Museum

This remarkable painting of a London "tube" station during an air-raid was a conspicuous exhibit in the Royal Academy of 1918. It is at once a true human document of a typical episode and a grandly planned decorative painting in which the alien figures are stated with simplicity and grandeur.

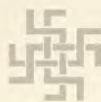


more numerous were those who adopted a post-Impressionist simplification of statement, among the most prominent members of this school being the brothers Stanley and Gilbert Spencer, Paul and John Nash, and Henry Lamb. Pictures by all these artists and many others were also acquired for the Imperial War Museum.

Henry Lamb, another member of the New English Art Club who had attracted attention before the 1914-18 war by his powers of drawing and the emotional force in his pictures, was a comparative late-comer; for having been formerly a medical student he was fully occupied with Red Cross work up to and following the Armistice. When he resumed the brush, however, it was seen that he had taken notes during his service in Macedonia, and his picture "Advanced Dressing Station on the Struma, 1916," now in the Manchester Art Gallery, is a notable contribution to the pictorial exposition of the psychology of war. It is not the excitement or frenzy of fighting that Lamb shows us, but the boredom and dreariness of the men who are waiting for unutterable things to happen. Precisely drawn, wonderfully clear and simple in its design, this painting depicts a quiet moment in the campaigners' life, a moment when the weariness of all concerned finds abundant expression.

To deal with all the artists who painted war-pictures between 1914 and 1918 is obviously beyond the scope of this chapter; and therefore the work of many eminent painters—several of whom will be referred to subsequently—must be passed over in silence for the moment. Turning to a new subject does not necessarily change an artist's style, and it is the evolution of a new style rather than the discovery of a new subject which vitally affects the history of art. The number of Official Artists appointed was evidence of the curious way in which the 1914-18 war persuaded a "Business Government" to treat art with more seriousness and consideration than it had yet received in Great Britain. While many artists, like John Lavery and Muirhead Bone, continued their former style and practice when engaged on these new subjects, other artists, as we have seen, were fired by their experiences in the trenches to the invention of new styles for the expression of new emotions. This direct or indirect influence of the war on art was not limited only to the artists who had served abroad; occasionally it made itself felt in the work of the men who stayed at home.

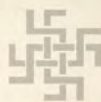
The most remarkable war-picture in the Royal Academy of 1918 had for its subject a London "Tube" station during an air raid. Walter Bayes's great canvas "The Underworld" is a vigorous and haunting painting which in its style approaches the new manner of post-Impressionism. Designed as a mural decoration, the picture shows an appropriate monumental treatment of the alien figures who sprawl about the platform.





The faces are not English faces, but on occasions such as the artist depicts London's underworld was full of these types. Bayes ably commemorated in their characteristic attitudes and dishevelled condition the dreary languor of these semi-orientals waiting in safety for the "All Clear" signal which will tell them it is safe to return to the surface of the Metropolis. Walter Bayes, who was the Head of the Westminster School of Art from 1918 to 1934 and is a member of a well-known family of artists, has long been known as a decorative painter of great talent, but he had never previously produced a painting so precious as a human document.

The public, as well as the technical expert, can appreciate good drawing, attractive colour, and well-balanced design; but these things alone will not serve to capture its imagination. It demands rightly that a picture should contain an idea or an emotion that can be clearly grasped. To some artists—mostly of the younger generation—the war afforded the most astounding experience they had ever undergone, and, overwhelmed by it, they burst through the barriers of school-taught orthodox painting to express with a primitive ferocity the intensity of their own sensations. By placing on permanent record, not only the scenes caused but the emotions evoked by the first Great War, they have rendered services to both History and Art which posterity will know how to value.



## BRITISH ART AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

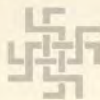
FROM JOHN S. SARGENT TO AUGUSTUS JOHN

## § I

SINCE the First World War art has become a cosmopolitan business. Rapidity of communications and the interchange of international ideas have broken down the old frontiers of thought, so that while painters of various styles can now be found in all civilised countries, the styles throughout the world are very much alike, and it is difficult to make out a case for any distinctive national art. If it be hazardous, however, to assert that there exists a "British School," distinct from the schools of painting in France, Spain, Italy, and other countries, it may nevertheless be said with sufficient confidence that since 1919, in the words of Sir Robert Witt, "British art has stood second to none in the world."

Writing over thirty years ago, the late Sir Walter Armstrong said: "The Pre-Raphaelite revolt is the last great movement which really belongs to the history of British Art. Those developments which have taken place since are more cosmopolitan than British. They have been moved towards assimilating our insular ideas to those of the Continent, which, in painting, means the ideas of France and Holland. Being all moves in one direction, they have had considerable similarity one with another, and it is scarcely worth while to dwell much on the differences which separate the neo-Scots school from that of Newlyn, or both from those franker disciples of Paris who have been so greatly encouraged by the genius of two Americans, Whistler and Sargent."

John Singer Sargent, R.A., who has been perhaps the greatest influence in portrait-painting in our time, was himself Paris-trained. Born at Florence in 1856, the son of American parents—his father being a physician at Boston, U.S.A.—Sargent was educated in Italy and Germany, studied painting under Carolus Duran at Paris, and finally settled in England during the 'eighties. In his own person, therefore, Sargent represented in the most marked manner the cosmopolitan experiences which go to the making of a modern painter. A word may be said here as to his master, Carolus Duran, who was born at Lille in 1837, for though this painter





won the coveted Prix de Rome and spent four years in Italy, he became the leading French portrait painter of his time by reason of his later study of Velazquez in Madrid. Carolus Duran, then, was one of the pioneers who turned away the thought of his contemporaries and pupils from the Italian and Flemish to the Spanish schools of painting, and his art, like that of his still more famous pupil Sargent, is largely derived from Velazquez. The English portraiture of the eighteenth century, as has already been shown, was modelled firstly on the practice of Van Dyck and secondly on that of the Venetians; the new note introduced into portrait-painting towards the middle of the nineteenth century, and still dominant at the present day, is based on the work of Velazquez and Goya.

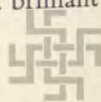
While many have drawn inspiration from this common source, the results obtained from following, in the main, the Spanish tradition, have varied considerably according to the individual temperaments of the artists. In Sargent's painting we see the irrepressible energy which we associate with Transatlantic business enterprise; he was a "hustler" in paint who swept us off our feet by the amazing vivacity of his brushwork and by the almost uncanny actuality with which he set a living being before us. A vigorous draughtsman, using sweeps of paint with economic mastery, Sargent developed powers of psychological penetration which made him supreme in the rendering of character. Some of his male portraits have been so merciless in their unmasking of the real minds of his sitters that they have justified the amusing but apt comment of "Mr. Dooley":

"Stand there," he sez, "while I tear the ugly black heart out av ye."

At the same time his "Lord Ribblesdale" proves how noble a rendering of human dignity the artist can achieve when he is in complete sympathy with his sitter. The wonderful series of Wertheimer portraits, now in the National Gallery, is at once a revelation of the artist's power in the expression of different characters and a souvenir of his long association with the astute and esteemed art-dealer who, from his earliest days, stoutly affirmed his belief in the genius of Sargent.

From the time he first exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1879, Sargent's career was one of a steady upward progress. It was not till 1894 that he was elected an A.R.A., but before this he had exhibited with distinction both at the Academy and at the New English Art Club. His early portraits show traces of the influence of the Impressionists, but Sargent's connection with this school is less obvious in his portraits than in his landscapes and water-colours.

In water-colour Sargent created a new and distinct style which had a great effect on his contemporaries. How skilfully he used it as a brilliant



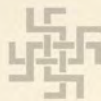


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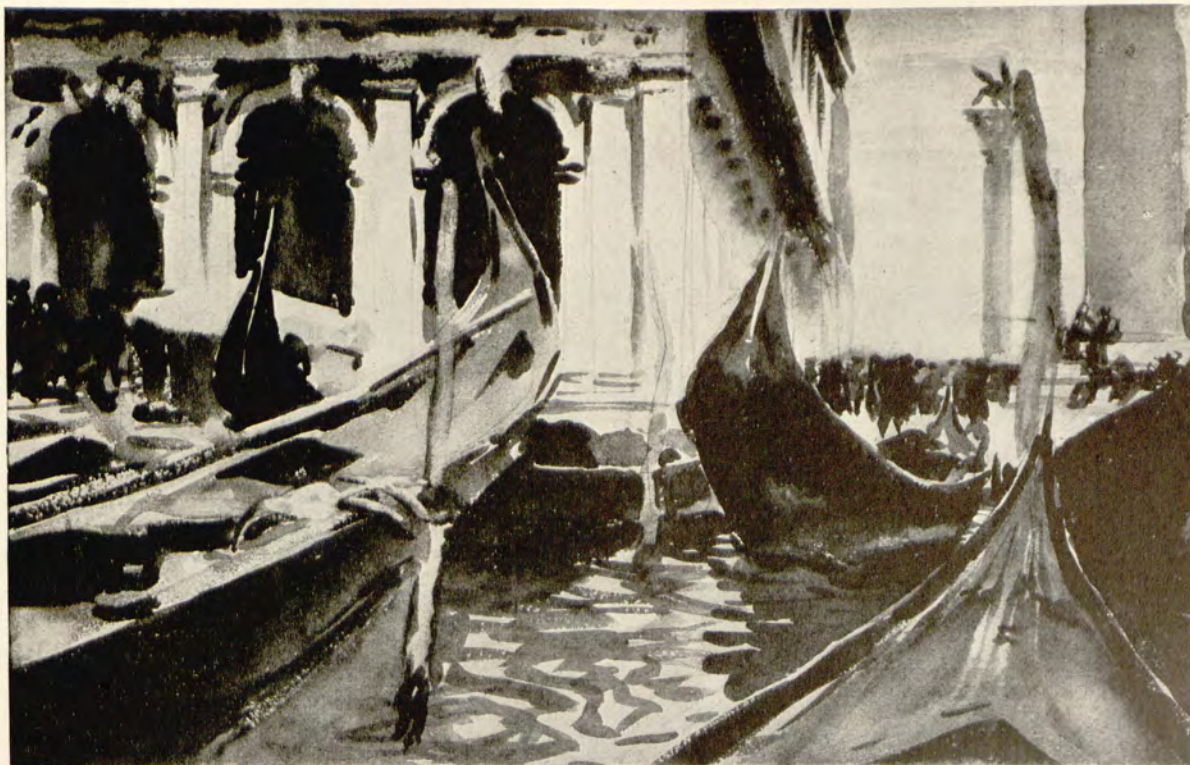
**"LORD RIBBLESDALE," BY JOHN S. SARGENT**

National Gallery, London

Painted in 1902, this noble full-length portrait presents Lord Ribblesdale, then Master of the Buckhounds, in hunting costume. It was given to the National Gallery by the sitter as a memorial of his wife and of his two sons who were killed respectively in Somaliland and in Gallipoli.







"THE PIAZZETTA, VENICE," BY JOHN S. SARGENT

Tate Gallery, London

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The intense realism of this water-colour is best seen when it is observed from some little distance. It is a brilliant study of sunshine playing on gondolas, the blue-green water of the canal, and on the arcades of a marble palace. In its breadth, vigour, and wonderful realisation of light and air, this characteristic water-colour is a masterpiece of impressionist illusionism.



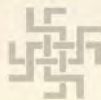
sketching medium may be seen in "The Piazzetta, Venice." Here, like Manet, he saw "no lines in Nature," but built up a vivid impression of the scene before him by brilliant touches of colour and strong contrasts of light and shade. It is a broad, vigorous style which, despite its summariness, gives a marvellous sense of actuality in the hands of a master. Though pre-eminent as a portrait painter and as a sketcher in water-colour, Sargent executed notable works in a variety of styles and media. He painted important decorative works for public buildings in the United States, and he also did some sculpture, notably his "Crucifixion" for the Boston Library, U.S.A., a bronze study of which may be seen in the Tate Gallery.

Sargent died, at the age of sixty-nine, in 1925.

## § 2

Glancing briefly at the number of British artists who have attained eminence during this period by the character and individuality of their work—a number so great that it excludes any possibility of doing justice to them all within the space of this chapter—it is not without significance to note how few of them have received their training in the Royal Academy schools. Since the first World War the most fruitful forcing-grounds for British Art have been the Scottish schools and the Slade School in London; other painters of distinction have come from the Royal College of Art in South Kensington or have received their training abroad.

It has often been said that the rank of a living artist can most fairly be gauged by the esteem in which he is held by foreign countries. By this reckoning a high place must be assigned to Frank Brangwyn, R.A., for few British artists have been more fêted than he on the Continent and in America. Paris, Munich, Vienna, Brussels, Madrid, Holland, and Italy, all have showered honours and distinctions on this artist. Born at Bruges in 1867, of Welsh extraction, Brangwyn was from boyhood familiar with the splendours of Flemish tapestry, and though he first obtained notice by his power of drawing as an illustrator, his real bent has always been towards decorative art. In his early boyhood he worked with William Morris, executing designs for tapestries, etc.; but when he was only sixteen he left Morris and went to sea, and the knowledge of shipping and seafaring life which he thus gained stood him in good stead when he again returned to London and the practice of art. All his most important early pictures were of subjects he had seen at sea; among them may be mentioned "Ashore" (1890), "Burial at Sea" and "Salvage" (1891), and "The Convict Ship" (1892). The sturdy drawing, glowing colour, and spacious





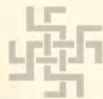


"THE POULTERER'S SHOP," BY FRANK BRANGWYN

Tate Gallery, London

*W. F. Mansell.*

Frank Brangwyn has a world-wide reputation as a decorative artist. This picture, originally exhibited in the Academy of 1916, is a splendid example of his original powers of colour and design, and reveals the romantic imagination which enables him to turn commonplace things like fruit, vegetables, dead poultry, and shop utensils into a glowing pageant full of splendour and opulence.



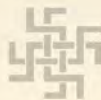
design in these works marked out the decorative painter of the future, though at this time the artist was earning his living principally by seafaring drawings, executed for the *Graphic* and other illustrated papers. In addition to his drawings and paintings Brangwyn also devoted himself to etching, and his plates of the working maritime life on the lower reaches of the Thames were among the earliest of his works to attain a wide popularity.

Influenced to some extent perhaps by the Belgian painter and sculptor Constantin Meunier (1831-1905), whose vigorous art illustrated the industrial and mining life of the "Black Country" of Belgium, Brangwyn soon made his reputation as a painter by his unique gift of basing heroic decorative designs on typical scenes and episodes of modern industrialism. In 1895 his "Trade on the Beach" was bought for the Luxembourg, Paris, and a few years later his panel "Commerce," in the Royal Exchange, London, made his decorative gifts widely known to his own compatriots. His decorations for the Skinners' Hall and the series of panels illustrating typical modern industries, originally designed for the British Pavilion in the Venice International Exhibition and now in the Leeds Art Gallery, may be cited as brilliant examples of the decorative mural painting which this artist did so much to revive. Another fascinating series is that which the artist painted for the House of Lords, but which ultimately found its home at Cardiff.

Though a number of projects of decorative painting in the United States have taken up much of Frank Brangwyn's time, so that he is now a comparatively rare exhibitor in London, he has been a prolific producer of pictures, water-colours, and etchings in addition to his mural painting. He is limited neither in method nor in subject, but whether the latter be a scene in Italy, an impression of Pittsburg, or a table laden with the rich fruits of a sumptuous dessert, the presentation of the theme is invariably decorative and grandiose. "The Poulterer's Shop," which was bought for the nation by the Chantrey Trustees from the Academy of 1916 is a glowing example of the sense of opulent splendour which Frank Brangwyn's imagination and executive skill can extract from dead poultry, a heap of vegetables, and commonplace utensils.

### § 3

Since Pettie and Orchardson, Scotland has always been strongly represented in the Royal Academy. The younger Scottish School originated in Glasgow, whither about seventy years ago a very large number of fine pictures by the French romanticists found their way into public and private





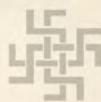


"BEN LEDI," BY DAVID YOUNG CAMERON

Tate Gallery, London

*W. F. Mansell.*

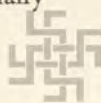
Equally distinguished as a landscape-painter and as an etcher, D. Y. Cameron is one of the most personal artists of the day. This painting of a Highland landscape illustrates the delicate drawing and fine simplicity of design which characterise all the artist's works.



collections. In the appreciation of Corot and his contemporaries, Scotland was far ahead of England, and since Whistler also found favour more quickly in the north than in the south, the Scottish painters were, generally speaking, more advanced than their English confrères during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Of the group of painters known as the Glasgow School, it may be broadly said that the figure painters were chiefly influenced by Whistler, the landscapists by Corot and the French romanticists. Among the most distinguished of the figure painters were the late James Guthrie (1859-1930), who was elected President of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1902, and who added much of the robustness of Raeburn to a Whistlerian elegance and colour harmony; John Lavery (1857-1941), who developed very successfully in his own way the graceful style and dainty colouring of Whistler, whether in portraying manly dignity, feminine loveliness, or in painting landscapes; the late E. A. Walton (1860-1922), who was equally at home in portrait and in landscape; Harrington Mann, George Henry, and the late Edward Hornel (1865-1933), who, with thick, enamel-like paint, invented a new style in which children are usually seen decoratively disposed amid flowery gardens of a semi-tropical luxuriance. In this school a place apart was held by the late Joseph Crawhall, whose animal paintings, and particularly his water-colours on brown holland, had an inevitability of line and simple grandeur of design which related his work to that of the greatest oriental artists.

Among the Glasgow landscape painters, most of whom, like the late W. Y. Macgregor, who died in 1923, and David Gauld, followed either the Barbizon or Modern Dutch Schools, the premier place has now been won by D. Y. Cameron, R.A. Born at Glasgow in 1865, David Young Cameron has made a foremost place for himself as an etcher, rivalling Muirhead Bone in his masterly interpretation of architectural and landscape subjects, while he has also developed a most personal style as a painter, depicting the hills and lakes of Scotland and the picturesque houses in her cities with a fine simplicity of design and clear, translucent colour. While in his use of delicate hues, harmonised with subtlety, D. Y. Cameron shows more than a passing acquaintance with Impressionism, in his emphasis of line and tendency towards simplification he exhibits in a mild and restrained form that reaction from Impressionism which ran to excess in Paris.

While there has never been a definite Edinburgh School, several modern painters of distinction have been associated with the Scottish capital, among them being James Pryde, one of the most original and gifted artists of recent years. Born in 1869, Pryde was the son of the late Dr. David Pryde of St. Andrews and subsequently of Edinburgh. Though nominally







"THE VESTIBULE," BY JAMES PRYDE

Property of the Earl of Crawford

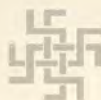
Dramatic design is the supreme quality in the work of this most original artist. We do not know who are the figures in the foreground nor exactly what they are doing, but the stage is so beautifully set that we feel intensely that something is about to happen, and spellbound by the dignity of the scene we also wait in "The Vestibule" content with a spectacle of life that is mysterious but suggestive.

he received his training, like so many others, at the Atelier Julien in Paris, very little French influence appears in his work. He learnt the decorative value of the silhouette from Whistler, something about the effective disposal of masses, perhaps, from the brilliant French poster-designer Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), and a good deal about dramatic composition from Hogarth. In other words, Pryde made his own choice among the masters and built up his own art by affinities and observation. It was by poster work that Pryde first roused the attention of the public. He had a sister, Mabel Pryde, who married another artist, William Nicholson, and the brothers-in-law, working under the pseudonym of "Beggartass Brothers," produced a series of posters in the 'nineties which electrified London by their outstanding artistic qualities.

After he gave up poster-designing, Pryde never made any attempt to obtain popularity. A fastidious and self-exacting painter, his output was comparatively small, and the pictures which he showed at the old Grosvenor Gallery, at the New Gallery, and at the exhibitions of the International Society, of which he was a distinguished member, appealed more to the collector and connoisseur than to the general public. As a painter he is difficult to place, for he was neither a realist nor an out-and-out romanticist. His subjects are a little mysterious, and though his pictures often have an eighteenth-century look, we hesitate to assign them to any definite period. What is happening in the picture is rarely clear, yet the artist contrives to hold our interest by a suggestion that something is about to happen. There is a strong feeling of latent drama in his work, because he excelled in Dramatic Design.

"The Vestibule," in the Earl of Crawford's Collection, is a characteristic example of the peculiar qualities in Pryde's work. Here, as in all his pictures, we find a stage beautifully set, a scene which so bewitches us by the nobility of its design, by the monumental splendour of its masses, by rich glows of colour from a whole of harmonious sombreness, that we catch our breath with delight at the spectacle, just as we might do in a theatre as the curtain goes up and before we have any knowledge of what action will take place on the scene. Pryde died in 1941.

William Nicholson, who was born at Newark-on-Trent in 1872, served a lengthy apprenticeship before he developed into the popular painter of portraits and still-life that he is to-day. After the success of the posters which he designed jointly with his brother-in-law, he laid the foundations of his individual reputation by a remarkable series of woodcuts in colour. Three of his books, an *Alphabet*, an *Almanac of Twelve Sports*, and *London Types*—all published in 1898—widened the base of his popularity and made the name of William Nicholson known to thousands who rarely visit picture exhibitions.





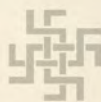


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"PORTRAIT OF MISS JEKYLL," BY WILLIAM NICHOLSON

Tate Gallery, London

Equally distinguished as a designer of posters and woodcuts and as a painter of realistic portraits and still-life subjects, William Nicholson in this portrait presents his sitter with the uncompromising realism of a seventeenth-century Dutchman and with the decorative dignity of a Whistler.



More definitely realistic, less imaginative, and less mysterious than Pryde, William Nicholson has this much in common with him, that he, too, is pre-eminently a designer. This much we may see in a work so remarkable for its fidelity to nature as his "Portrait of Miss Jekyll." In its suave rendering of character and atmosphere this portrait is descended from Velazquez through Whistler, but in its arresting simplicity, the effective placing of the chair-back, head, and hands as the accented notes of a diagonal composition, the picture is also related to the posters of the Beggarstaff Brothers and to the masterly designs of the Far East.

Another group of Scottish artists, of whom the best known are the late S. J. Peploe, J. D. Fergusson, and the late Joseph Simpson, were connected with Edinburgh, not Glasgow, and formed another distinct group. All of them were at first influenced by Whistler and subsequently by Manet and later French artists; strong drawing, bright clean colour, and emphatic design are characteristic to the work of all three. J. D. Fergusson is the only one of the trio alive to-day, and his work has amply fulfilled its early promise.

The once much-talked-of Newlyn School was never a local development, like that of Glasgow, but consisted of a group of artists drawn from various places who found this Cornish fishing village, near Penzance, a pleasant place in which to settle and practise open-air painting. Stanhope Forbes, Napier Henry, the sea-painter, and Frank Bramley have been considered the leaders and founders of this school. Other artists have founded colonies at St. Ives and elsewhere along the Cornish coast, some of the best known being the marine painter Julius Olsson, R.A., the landscape painter Lamorna Birch, R.A., and that particularly brilliant pair, alike in portraiture, landscape, and figure subjects, Harold and Laura Knight, both of whom are now Academicians and who have now gone to Malvern.

#### § 4

No two institutions in the United Kingdom have produced a more remarkable sequence of illustrious artists than the New English Art Club and the Slade School of Art, and since, though separate in their origin, the two have come to be closely related to each other, it is convenient to consider them together. The New English Art Club was founded in the 'eighties by a number of young artists whose bond of union was a Paris training. Among the founders were the painters P. Wilson Steer and Frederick Brown (died 1940), and the sculptors J. Havard Thomas and T. Stirling Lee; while other early members included John S. Sargent, H. H. La Thangue, Mark Fisher, and George Clausen. For nearly forty years the New English Art Club has supplied the Royal Academy with



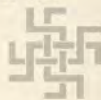


nearly all its most distinguished members. During this period many Academicians and Associates are or have been exhibitors at the New English Art Club, while almost all the most important official art positions in London were gradually captured by members of this Club. Charles J. Holmes, who died in 1938 and who was Director of the National Gallery; D. S. MacColl, who was for some time Keeper of the Wallace Collection; William Rothenstein, who was Principal of the Royal College of Art at South Kensington from 1920 to 1935, were all former members of the New English Art Club.

Since its foundation the New English Art Club has largely recruited its strength from students of the Slade School, and the close alliance between the School and the Club is easily understood when we remember that the bond of union between the original clubmen was a Paris training, and when we discover that French influence has been paramount at the Slade School. This school of drawing and painting, situated in Gower Street and connected with University College, was named after Felix Slade (1790-1868), a famous art collector, who left money for the endowment of (Slade) professorships of fine art in Oxford, Cambridge, and University College, London.

The first Slade Professor at University College was E. J. Poynter (1871-75), under whose direction the teaching was much the same as that given in the Royal Academy Schools, but in 1876 he was succeeded by a distinguished French artist, Alphonse Legros, who, more than any other one man perhaps, may be said to have changed the character of British painting. Born at Dijon in 1837 and afterwards studying in Paris under the famous teacher of drawing, Lecoq de Boisbaudran, Alphonse Legros came to England in 1863. He was befriended by Whistler, Rossetti, Watts, and other English artists, and made his living principally by etching and by teaching. For a time he taught at the South Kensington School of Art, but in 1876 he was appointed Slade Professor at University College, a position he held till 1892. His picture of French peasant women at prayer, painted at University College in 1888, is a characteristic example of the seriousness and earnestness of his art, and by its fine precision of drawing shows that Legros was a lineal descendant of Ingres. To a generation absorbed in problems of colour, lighting, and atmosphere, this broad-minded exponent of the French classical school came as a prophet in his insistence on impeccable drawing as the sure foundation of all good painting.

At the Slade, Legros worked wonders in two ways. His great reputation as a teacher attracted the most promising art students of the time; and his influence on these students had far-reaching effects. Legros, it has been well said, "brought English art again into closer touch with the





*W. F. Mansell.*

"FEMMES EN PRIÈRE," BY ALPHONSE LEGROS (1837-1911)

Tate Gallery, London

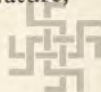
A characteristic picture of French peasant-women at prayer in a church by the great teacher of the Slade School, who, coming from Paris to London in 1863, "contributed largely to the noticeable revival of draughtsmanship in England at the close of the nineteenth century." Legros was naturalised as an Englishman in 1881.



main European tradition, and contributed largely to the noticeable revival of draughtsmanship in England at the close of the nineteenth century." Among the most gifted of his pupils were Charles Wellington Furse, William Strang, and William Rothenstein, all of whom laid the foundations of their reputations as painters by sterling drawing. After Legros left the Slade in 1892, the great tradition he bequeathed to the School was ably maintained by Professor Frederick Brown, among whose pupils were William Orpen and Augustus John, and after Professor Brown's retirement, Henry Tonks, who died in 1937, also of the New English Art Club, successfully conducted the Slade School along the lines laid down by Legros. The present head is Professor Randolph Schwabe.

While Legros was responsible for the renewed attention paid to drawing, other artists gradually made England familiar with the new ideas about colour which had originated in France. Conspicuous among the pioneers in this direction was George Clausen, R.A. Born in London in 1852, he was an art student at South Kensington from 1867 to 1873, and then went to Paris, where he was at first chiefly influenced by J. F. Millet and his follower, Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-84). His well-known picture at the Tate Gallery, "The Girl at the Gate," a comparatively early work painted in 1889, shows George Clausen still dominated by the art of Bastien-Lepage. Later, the artist was profoundly influenced by the colour of the Impressionists, especially by Monet and Pissarro, and in his second manner, while frequently adhering to pastoral and peasant subjects which recall Millet, Clausen presented them in prismatic colours in which the illumination of real sunshine is rendered with exquisite truth and delicacy. George Clausen has painted both the life and the light of the fields, fusing the humanity of J. F. Millet with the Nature-worship of Claude Monet. Possessing a wide range, he has painted portraits and allegorical subjects as well as landscapes and pastorals. All his work is distinguished by its beauty of colour, radiant illumination, and human tenderness.

P. Wilson Steer, O.M., was born at Birkenhead in 1860. After studying at the École des Beaux Arts, Paris, he returned to England full of enthusiasm for the Impressionists, and among his early works may be found experiments in the style of Manet, Degas, Monet, and Renoir. But while he has always preserved their keen interest in light, Wilson Steer gradually broke away from the close imitation of the Impressionists and developed a style of his own in which the vivacity and broken touch of the French painters were mingled with elements derived from such British painters as Gainsborough, Constable, and Turner. The later art of Steer may be described as a blend of English and French traditions. In the landscapes of his maturity he has used pinks, mauves, and blues very sparingly and concentrated on the varied greens and yellows of Nature,



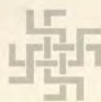


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# THE GIRL AT THE GATE," BY GEORGE CLAUSEN

Tate Gallery, London

Tender and sympathetic in its feeling for the sweet simplicity of rural life, this picture shows the influence of J. F. Millet and his follower the peasant-painter Bastien-Lepage. Painted in 1889, it is the best-known example of the first manner of an accomplished artist who in more recent pictures added a prismatic beauty of colour to his interpretations of the life of cottagers and agriculturists.





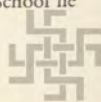


*Reproduced by permission of the Artist.*

*P. Laib.*

**"PORTRAIT OF MRS. HAMMERSLEY," BY P. WILSON STEER**

In this radiant, sunlit portrait we see the confluence of British and French influences—Gainsborough, Constable, Watteau, and the Impressionists—which are happily blended in the distinctive art of Wilson Steer, who, as this picture proves, excels equally in portraiture and landscape painting. Steer is one of the founders of the New English Art Club, and as one of the teaching staff of the Slade School he has had a widespread influence on English art.



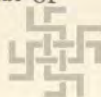
excelling in the rendering of wooded country with trees glittering in the sunshine after rain, and also in depicting the light and atmosphere in great vistas of spacious countrysides. Equally distinguished as a figure painter, Steer is represented by a self-portrait in the Pitti Gallery, Florence, by "The Music Room" in the Tate Gallery, and by figure subjects as well as landscapes in many other public galleries. Apparently averse to Academical honours, Steer remained the most loyal member of the New English Art Club. The grace and refinement of his portraiture are beautifully exemplified in his "Portrait of Mrs. Hammersley," in which the background also reveals his powers as a landscape painter. Steer was awarded the Order of Merit in 1931, and died in 1942.

Two other members of the New English Art Club who have helped to introduce Impressionism into England are Lucien Pissarro and Walter Sickert. The former is the eldest son of Camille Pissarro. He was born at Paris in 1863, and grew up among the Impressionists and neo-Impressionists, so that he may be said to have been impregnated with the science of colour from his early boyhood. In 1893 he settled in London, where he came into touch with William Morris, and setting up a private press he made a European reputation as a wood-engraver and printer of beautiful books. As a painter he made his way more slowly, but his landscapes have always aroused the enthusiasm of his brother artists by their just observation and masterly statement of the actual hues in Nature.

Walter Richard Sickert, born in 1860, was in his youth a pupil of Whistler, but the influence of this master was later superseded by that of the Impressionists, especially that of Degas, after the artist took up his residence in Paris, where he remained for several years. Making a speciality of painting low-life scenes, portraying humble interiors, the galleries of theatres and music-halls, costers and flower-girls, Sickert but rarely explored, even in his landscapes, scenes at Dieppe, Venice or Bath, the realm of full sunshine which was the happy hunting-ground of the earlier Impressionists. In his interiors Sickert is known chiefly as an exquisite interpreter of the subtle beauties of twilight, in his exteriors he usually preferred grey days or at least moments when direct sunshine was masked; but within his self-imposed limits he was a true Impressionist, always giving his first attention to the lighting, and making lights even in darkness sparkle and vibrate with the magic of his deft broken touches.

## § 5

Returning to the pupils of Legros, first attention must be given to Charles Wellington Furse (1868-1904), who, but for his early death, would assuredly have attained a position in the art world rivalling that of







*W. F. Mansell.*

"THE RETURN FROM THE RIDE," BY CHARLES WELLINGTON  
FURSE, (1868-1904)

Tate Gallery, London

But for his early death at the age of thirty-six, this gifted artist would have been the rival of Sargent. His genius for the grand style both in figure-painting and in landscape culminated in this great equestrian portrait group of his friends Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Waterfield. This picture was exhibited at the Academy in 1903 and bought for the nation two years later by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest.



Sargent and Orpen. Born at Staines, Furse was only sixteen when he began to study under Legros at the Slade School. Later he worked in Paris, and returning to London he soon made his mark at the New English Art Club, where his portraits especially attracted attention. He was only twenty-five when he began his heroic equestrian portrait of Lord Roberts—now in the Tate Gallery—a great work which, being interrupted by illness, he was never able to complete, for after his recovery he was too much occupied with other work to return to it at once.

Between 1899 and 1901 much of his time was taken up in painting the decorative spandrels for Liverpool Town Hall, and his remarkable capacity for executing imposing works on a large scale was clearly revealed to the world in 1903, when "The Return from the Ride" was the "picture of the year" at the Academy. In this magnificent portrait group of his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Waterfield, the figures are nearly life-size and the whole picture is painted with the assurance and exuberance of a master. In the following year, when he was elected A.R.A., he repeated his success at the Academy with an open-air portrait of his wife, entitled "Diana of the Uplands," another life-sized work full of breeziness and polished brilliance. For many years the artist had suffered from lung trouble; and this finally caused his death in the very year in which he had won his Associateship. The breadth and dignity of his outlook equalled the felicity of his execution, and while the great performances in which his art culminated may be said to have been based to some extent on the practice of Velazquez, his own personal gifts and his keen observation of Nature gave an individual distinction to his works which makes them essentially original.

William Strang (1859–1921) was born at Dumbarton, came to London in 1875, and developed remarkable powers as a draughtsman under Legros at the Slade School. The first works of his to attract notice were his portrait drawings and his etchings, which attained distinction in two very different fields. His portraits, whether drawn or etched, were intensely realistic, of a Holbeinesque clarity and simplicity, strong in line and character; but in etchings of other subjects Strang displayed imaginative gifts of the highest order, and his illustrations to the Bible, *Don Quixote*, and to some of Kipling's stories revealed a mind as alert to think and philosophise as his eye to see and his hand to record.

As a painter Strang had two distinct styles: in the first his colour was based on that of the great Venetians, in the second his palette became much brighter and lighter and the influence of Manet was apparent. The union of his incisive drawing with this pure clean colour produced in his second manner pictures of arresting brilliance. "Bank Holiday," painted in 1912 and now in the Tate Gallery, is a fine example of his later style.





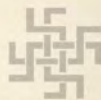


*W. F. Mansell.*

"BANK HOLIDAY," BY WILLIAM STRANG (1859-1921)

Tate Gallery, London

Notable alike for its incisive drawing, clear, brilliant colour, effective design, and humorous, but sympathetic, observation of life, this picture of the embarrassment of a holiday-couple unused to the ways of restaurants marks the culmination of the artist's second manner, in which he united the severe classical drawing of Legros to the clean-coloured realism of Manet.

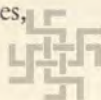


and while displaying the severity of his line and the emphatic realism with which he presented figures and objects, it also reveals his imaginative gifts in the subtle rendering of the embarrassment of a holiday couple unused to the etiquette which prevails in restaurants.

## § 6

While the painters mentioned above are far from exhausting the list of distinguished artists who received their training directly from Legros, his successor, Professor Brown, may be said to have been fortunate in having still more brilliant pupils. Of these first attention must be given to William Orpen (1878-1931) and Augustus John, who, by common consent, were the most richly gifted of the many students of the Slade School who have attained eminence in their profession.

Now and again in the history of art there are happy individuals who seem to escape the student stage altogether and appear as masters from the first. Lawrence was one; Millais was another; Orpen was a third. Born on November 27, 1878, William Orpen attracted the attention of London connoisseurs while he was still a student at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art. The writer can remember the sensation caused at South Kensington over forty years ago by a drawing from the life with which this young Irishman won the gold medal at the National Competition for works by students at schools of art all over the country. Never before or since has there been so much unanimity of opinion about a prize-winner. Everybody was talking then about "young Orpen's" drawing, for while it satisfied the academic mind by its flawless perfection and anatomical correctness, it roused enthusiasm among more independent critics because it was not a dead thing—as so many prize-drawings are—but a real human figure in which every line pulsed with life. It was clear that a great draughtsman had come to town, and when Orpen left Ireland and came to the Slade School his drawings and paintings soon became conspicuous in the exhibitions of the New English Art Club. In the first decade of the twentieth century this youth in his twenties was already ranked, not with other students, but with artists, like Wilson Steer, who were recognised as masters. What distinguished Orpen at once from other able draughtsmen of his age was his precocious facility in the manipulation of paint. Most students have to learn slowly how to handle pigment; the first paintings Orpen exhibited proved that he had a mastery of the brush. A beautiful example of his early fluency is the picture in the Tate Gallery, entitled "The Mirror," painted in 1900. Even at this period Orpen showed a wide range; he painted portraits, still-life, nudes, and subject pictures,



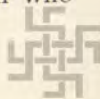


while perhaps the most characteristic of these early works were interiors with figures, pictures which seemed to have the fullness of content of a Van Eyck, though painted with the exuberance of a Hals.

In "The Mirror," traces of the influence of Whistler may still be seen ; in his later works Orpen's style became broader and more vigorous, his colour grew lighter and more brilliant, and in portraits his penetration into character gained in profundity. But the characterisation was keen in several early portraits, notably the "Charles Wertheimer," the first and only picture the artist exhibited at the Royal Academy prior to his election as Associate in 1910.

After his entry into the Royal Academy the art of William Orpen grew steadily in power and public favour, but his phenomenal success never warped his sincerity as an artist. While he contributed a generous measure of portraits to the exhibitions of Burlington House, he remained loyal to the New English Art Club, and there he again and again showed those inimitable pictures which an artist paints for his own delight and pleasure. Among them may be mentioned some notable scenes of vagrant and peasant life in Ireland, and playful allegories, like "Sowing the Seed," in which a true Irish sense of humour had been blended with pictorial and decorative charm. It was characteristic of Orpen's independence as an artist that of all the hundreds of portraits which he painted in Paris during and after the Peace Conference, the very best of them should be, not one of the famous statesmen and soldiers who sat to him, but a man who was a nonentity till his portrait was exhibited. The now famous "Chef de l'Hôtel Chatham" was not only the "picture of the year" at the 1921 Academy, it is a picture for all time which has and will have the wide human appeal of Moroni's "Portrait of a Tailor." In this portrait of the Chef in his immaculate white cap and jacket, standing beside his grill, we have Orpen at his very best, using all his amazing facility and dexterity in the handling of paint for the purpose of putting on canvas the rich, full humanity of a living being.

This artist's two great Peace pictures in the Academy of 1920, "Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles," and "A Peace Conference at the Quai d'Orsay," were an expansion of the delightful little interiors which he had sent in earlier days to the New English Art Club, and in a way his allegory, "Sowing the Seed," may be regarded as a prelude to the very different and far more serious painting, "To the Unknown Soldier," which was the centre of interest in the Academy of 1923. For both these paintings show high powers of imagination, and warn us that in marvelling at the quickness of his eye and at the unerring skill of his hand, we must not forget that William Orpen was also an artist with a keenly intelligent brain and with a warm imaginative heart, a man who





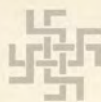
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Publishers of "Royal Academy Illustrated."*

*W. F. Mansell.*

"THE MIRROR," BY WILLIAM ORPEN (1878-1931)

Tate Gallery, London

Painted in 1900—when the artist was only twenty-two—this charming picture is already a master's work, showing nothing of the hesitancy or tentativeness of a novice. In the mirror is seen a diminished reflection of the other end of the room ; with the artist at work before his easel.





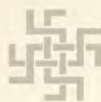


"CHEF DE L'HÔTEL CHATHAM," BY WILLIAM ORPEN  
Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy

In this portrait of a chef in a Paris hotel William Orpen uses his amazing powers as an artist to create a monumental work which makes the subject live for us in all its humanity. It is typical of our times that a great artist should choose such a subject, and should regard the painting so highly that he makes it the diploma work for the Royal Academy Gallery on his election.

could see both the humour and tragedy of life, who could feel deeply and could express his emotions either in genial satire or in a majestic allegory of epic grandeur.

The foundations of Augustus John's reputation were also laid in the drawings which he showed at the New English Art Club during the first decade of the present century. The exuberant flow of his line, his powerful modelling of form by subtleties of light and shade; the extraordinary vitality of his heads in chalks and sanguine—all seemed to suggest that in Augustus John was reincarnated the princely art of Rubens. One thing alone at that time limited his popularity. It was asked why did he draw such "ugly" people. The truth was that John, having an exceedingly original mind, found beauties in new types. A Welshman by birth and descent, John in his early days was a Borrow in paint, happiest and most at home among the Romanies. The apparent strangeness of his early drawings and paintings was largely due to his preference for gipsy types. While teaching at the Liverpool University School of Art, round about 1904, he would periodically disappear to go roving with the gipsies and then reappear, bringing with him pictures of the raggle-taggle life of the caravan. These pictures, bright and clear in colour, incisive in line, and effective in composition, were a new thing in painting. As a painter John did not possess the precocious facility of Orpen, and his early work often shows a certain heaviness of handling when compared with his present-day pictures, and in acquiring mastery of the brush John gradually evolved two distinct manners. Influenced to some extent by the modern French painters, he has shown a tendency to simplification which is most marked in his decorative work. In mural decorations, like "The Mumpers" at the Tate Gallery, John deliberately sacrifices roundness of form for decorative effect. Like Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), the great painter of the Ste. Geneviève series in the Panthéon, Paris, John found that the qualities he aimed at necessitated a certain flatness of treatment. At the same time his colour in these decorative works has become lighter and brighter. To this extent, in so far as it has tended to simplify rather than to complicate painting, the art of Augustus John may be said to illustrate a reaction from Impressionism. But while his decorative works often have primitive qualities, in his portraits he uses his full power of expressing form, and one of his greatest masterpieces, "Madame Suggia," proves that when this is his aim, John is second to no living man in realistic force and characterisation. His landscapes are closer to his decorative work than to his realistic portraiture. Finding his favourite subjects among the mountains and lakes of his native Wales, John invented a new genre in landscape. Emphatic in their design, simplified in form, and brilliant but still in colour, they struck a new note in British art.







"MME. SUGGIA," BY AUGUSTUS E. JOHN

W. F. Mansell.

A masterpiece of modern portraiture, this brilliant painting of a distinguished 'cellist shows the extraordinary power of Augustus John, who here presents his sitter in the "grand style." Encased in a setting that is simple yet eminently decorative, the figure of the performer is amazingly alive and full of action.



*W. F. Mansell.*

**"THE BURNING KILN," BY CHARLES JOHN HOLMES**

Tate Gallery, London

An impressive example of the new type of "industrial landscape" invented by C. J. Holmes, who was for many years Director of the National Gallery and formerly Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford University.





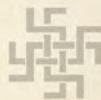


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**"MR. MINNEY," BY WALTER W. RUSSELL**

Tate Gallery, London

This racily observed and dexterously painted portrait of a professional model "in his best clothes" was the most discussed picture in the Academy of 1920. Russell was a pupil of Professor Frederick Brown, and for some years was a member of the teaching staff of the Slade School of Art.

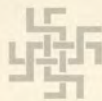




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**"THE COUNTESS OF ROCKSAVAGE AND SON," BY CHARLES SIMS**

This radiant portrait of the married sister of Sir Philip Sassoon and her son was deservedly the "picture of the year" in the Academy of 1922. While the actuality of the figures and the delicious play of sunlight on the flesh-tints reveal more than a passing acquaintance with the secrets of Impressionism, the clear design of the decorative setting has a formal beauty that reminds us of the work of the Italian Primitives.





Limitations of space prevent all but the briefest mention of another member of the New English Art Club, who created a new type of landscape. Charles John Holmes, a former Director of the National Gallery, was born in 1868 and died in 1938. The son of a Cornish clergyman, he distinguished himself as a classical scholar at Eton and Oxford, and made a reputation as a writer on art before his water-colours and paintings became generally appreciated. Always a stylist in design, simplicity was the outstanding quality in his work, and while he painted many impressive landscapes of the grim, gaunt scenery of the Lake Country, it was his peculiar distinction to invent "industrial landscape," pictures in which the factories and power-stations of modern industrialism are powerfully presented. "The Burning Kiln" is a fine example of the imaginative grandeur with which C. J. Holmes invested these new subjects.

Another pupil of Professor Brown, Walter W. Russell, R.A. (born 1867), added to the laurels of the New English Art Club by his brilliant portrait, "Mr. Minney."

In the period under review the two most distinguished artists who came from the Royal Academy Schools were Frederick Cayley Robinson (1862-1927) whose poetic and decorative work showed a mingling of Pre-Raphaelite ideals with the noble simplicity of Puvis de Chavannes, and Charles Sims, R.A. (1873-1928), who, after first attracting attention by the sheer beauty of his romantic idylls, astonished even his admirers by his exquisitely gracious and accomplished portrait "The Countess of Rocksavage and Son."

The premature death in 1914 of Spencer F. Gore robbed native art of a rarely gifted painter. Gore's work was all done before the 1914-18 war started, but full recognition of this achievement only came in the period following it. He was born in 1878, educated at Harrow and trained at the Slade. Sickert and Lucien Pissarro were early influences and before his short life closed he had created his own beautiful style of Impressionism. He died at Richmond in his thirty-sixth year, and among his last works are some superb paintings of the park.

In this short chapter it has been impossible to cover all the achievements in the field of British art that took place in the years that immediately followed the end of the first World War in 1918, but the record reveals that the academic tradition, modified by the newer tendencies, produced a notable body of good work.



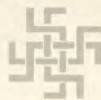
## ART ACCEPTS ALL MEN'S VISION

## A WORD ON THE NEW MOVEMENTS

THE study of modern art is often profoundly disturbing to those who have been trained in the traditions which prevailed during the latter part of the nineteenth century. It appears anarchic, perverse, unmannerly, ugly. There is no evidence of technical prowess nor of that craftsmanship which for hundreds of years has been accepted as an essential of the artist's equipment. *Naïveté* stands cheek by jowl with over-sophistication. The work of children, of infants even, is looked upon with deep interest, not merely as a promise of eventual development into worthwhile art, but as something standing in its own right and having a claim upon our attention as vision and as ideas of the visual world expressed in form and colour. The work of the most highly valued artists does not appear to differ widely from these lispings of the immature. The foremost critics write highly intelligent books about this seemingly unintelligent stuff—books that are often so highly intelligent, so profoundly philosophical, that the average reader is defeated by the abstract learning in their pages. Lecturers expound the significance of this new art. The expensive art galleries and public museums devote their wall space to exhibitions of this type of work. Newspaper critics treat it with respect and the deepest seriousness in their precious space. Connoisseurs and directors of galleries buy it.

Is all this simply contagious nonsense? Or a racket between dealers and critics and the artists to put a high price upon specious rubbish? Or a vast joke in bad taste? Or a sign of the prevailing madness of our times which, for all their marvellous advancement, are not free from much more universal and dangerous lunacy? Any of these, or a combination of some of them, suggest themselves as explanations, and might be accepted unless there is, in fact, justification for modern art in some other direction more rational and more honest.

First of all we must accept the fact that the traditional line, which painting and sculpture have followed in Europe almost unswervingly since Giotto led us away from Byzantine symbolism, has been broken. One writes "almost" because it is well to remember that artists as eminent as Botticelli





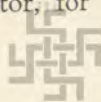
in his final period, El Greco, and William Blake did not truly follow that tradition, but prophetically worked in the modern manner. However, the main line is clear : an endeavour to represent in line and form and colour the appearance of objects in the natural world under the influence of light. All the slowly acquired knowledge of the Renaissance artists, all their accumulated technique, was devoted to this end. The rediscovery of Greek and Roman sculpture, which had pursued this same path to its own perfection, gave fresh emphasis to the European trend. The knowledge of scientific perspective of a Uccello, the understanding of anatomy of Michael Angelo or Leonardo, of light and shade by Rembrandt, the science of colour in the hands of a Delacroix or the Impressionists : everything over hundreds of years contributed to perfect this art of appearances, based on the duplication of their form and colour as the eye received it. Pictures and sculpture represented them as they could be seen from one point of space at one point of time. That was accepted as the end and ideal of art, and the craftsmanship which created that illusion most perfectly was accepted as the ideal workmanship of the artist.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century certain advances in applied science had their inevitable repercussion in this realm of art. The invention of photography, with its marvellous potentiality of depicting objects as the artist was striving to do, was one factor. The speeding up and ease of transport and the consequent opening up of the culture of the whole world, was another. The third was a movement in the mind of mankind which was in essence a reaction against the materialism which had been itself a by-product of scientific progress. The fourth element was the new science of psychology and the emphasis on the subconscious under the leadership of Freud and his disciples.

The first of these shook the faith of the artist in the essential necessity of his task of representation. If the camera were going to do the task as well or better, why so laboriously produce works of art ?

The second revealed the fact that other peoples had produced works of art along quite other lines than this European one of realistic representation. So-called savages created sculptural forms which evoked a response as lively as the sublime works of Michael Angelo ; Chinese or Persian perspective did not depend upon a single point of view at a single moment of time ; Africa, India, South America, the South Sea Islands, the art of Byzantium fossilised in the conservative ikon art of the Russian church : these and a score of other modes of expression were seen to be fulfilling the basic needs of art.

The third asked whether art might not find its real function in presenting ideas about the world rather than representing and depicting the outward appearance of things. It linked up with the former factor, for



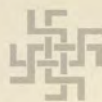


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# "HOMAGE TO MANET," BY WILLIAM ORPEN

Manchester Art Gallery

In this great portrait group Orpen paid homage not only to Manet, the leader of the French Impressionists, but also to a number of his own most illustrious contemporaries. The scene is a studio in Bolton Gardens. On the wall hangs Manet's portrait of "Eva Gonzales." Seated round the table from left to right are George Moore, Philip Wilson Steer, Sir Hugh Lane (resting his head on his hand) and Professor Henry Tonks. Standing behind Lane are D. S. MacColl and Sickert (holding the lapels of his coat).



Indira Gandhi National  
Centre for the Arts





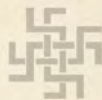
*Copyright : British Museum.*

### SEATED LOHAN

British Museum

A giant ceramic sculpture of the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-906), made of hard white pottery and glazed in the usual colours of this period. There were sixteen Lohans, the disciples or apostles of Buddha, and a series of these over-life-size statues of them was discovered. Eight were in magnificent condition, this one, now in the British Museum, being the finest of them all.

Seated on a rock, the symbol of stillness and timelessness, with the long ears which betoken holiness, the folded hands and the pose of contemplation, this work is one of the world's masterpieces of sculpture and ceramic art.



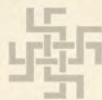
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*By permission of Berkeley Galleries.*

**"THE RICE GOD"**

This ancient Steatite carving from Sierra Leone would once have been dismissed as art because it failed to conform to the standards of European Classic beauty. During our century, however, we have grown to appreciate the power and the sense of rhythm (even though it be a new rhythm) of these works by primitive people working to express their own emotions and ideas.





anthropologists were making us aware of the symbolic power of the non-realistic images of these exotic arts.

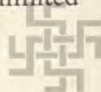
The fourth proposed the whole non-rational world of the subconscious as a possible territory where the artist might work, and alongside this emphasised the importance of the expression which children indulged in before their minds were moulded by the imitation of adults or the imposition of teaching.

In spite of these disturbing factors the artists were, as ever, under the compulsion to create, as they had been since Man first scratched figures on the walls of his cave. Art, therefore, switched itself along these new lines of development. If the artist could not compete with the camera he could take refuge in non-representational design which had always been so important an element underlying his work. If Polynesians and Chinese could express themselves in fantastic or ultra-simplified forms, could move away from the three-dimensional perspective, why should that not be done in the studios of Paris and London? If we were going to present the things of the mind which have nothing to do with time or space, why be bound by the representation of temporal and spacial actuality. Finally, if the subconscious were a province of art, why think at all?

In this development of art Impressionism was the last word in direct vision. It was rightly complained that Monet was "only an eye." He saw and put down exactly what he saw under the effect of light at that moment. The three great Post-Impressionists, Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh, were reactions from this too-visual art although all of them owed much to it, particularly in the way of brilliance of colour. Cézanne painted not so much Nature as the geometrical forms which his intellect told him lay beneath Nature. "Every form of Nature can be expressed by the cube, the cone and the cylinder," he asserted. Gauguin turned more and more towards decoration built up in two rather than three dimensions—a repercussion probably from the Japanese art which so affected the Paris of his day. Van Gogh expressed in his very brush-work the inner vitality of the world rather than its mere outward appearance.

From Cézanne derived all that art which is basically Cubistic, and in its extreme manifestation abandoned the appearance of Nature altogether for the fascination of pure solid geometrical forms and their relationship one with another. From Gauguin one branch of art increasingly pursued the primitive; whilst Van Gogh had opened the way to frankly subjective ideas about things rather than their visual form and colour. In these and other directions the barriers were down.

Actually we have to remember that Mankind inhabits two separate worlds. One is the world he shares with the animals, a sensuous world which he sees, hears, feels, tastes, and smells. These five senses are limited





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### "ELEVEN-HEADED AVALOKITO" FROM TIBET

Beside the art of Primitive people we have grown to appreciate the wonderful forms of the East where religious art, harking back to the fecundity of the Hindu faith, has given us the many-limbed and many-headed figures. This jewelled sculpture from Tibet reveals how wonderfully the formal problems can be overcome once we have released the mind from representation.



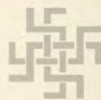




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### "TIKI" ANCESTRAL FIGURE

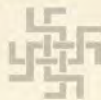
The Maoris of New Zealand yield yet another type of sculpture with an age-old tradition differing entirely from the European one. The strong, simplified forms, the deep shadows, the formalised arrangement of the limbs, the decorative tattooing on the face : these things combine to make a powerful work of art of this figure from the house of a Maori chief.



by immediate time and a narrow range in space. As soon as Man began to think consciously he created another world in his mind, a world vague at first but becoming fixed and permanent when he created language. Words—definite articulated sounds each linked to a special idea and accepted in that association between one man and another—were more than a means of communication. They were the furniture, the contents of this new world of human consciousness. It was free from the limitations of space and time. In that world things which were not present could be evoked as easily as things which were. It was the world of ideas. The great change-over which took place in art towards the end of the nineteenth century and has continued throughout our own time was the granting of the freedom of that world of the mind to the artist instead of confining him to the limitations of the world of the visual sense in which European art at least had walked steadily for several hundred years.

The artist still had the limitation that he had to use visual symbols, but he was free to use any kind of symbol which expressed any idea, and not only the reiteration of the appearance of the thing. His task was to invent visual symbols which should be as universal and entirely satisfying in his realm as words had proved in this vast world of the mind. (Actually any symbol has to be translated into a word or words before it can have its place in the world of the mind. If an artist draws a cat we mentally say "cat" in order to make the picture part of the furniture of our mind.) It has to be granted that so far the artists have often failed to invent satisfying symbols, and some thinkers assert that by the nature of things he never can. But at least we owe it to the progressive contemporary artist to believe that he is trying to reach this goal, that he is honest and sincere. This belief, and not a cynical accusation of dishonesty, facile humour, or aggravating lunacy has to be our approach to modernist art.

Thus if a Simultanist or Futurist puts on his canvas many aspects and segments of a subject which in real life can only be seen from different viewpoints (since only one material thing can occupy one space at any given point of time) we can realise that such things can be in the world of the mind which he is depicting. If a sculptor so analyses the forms of a figure that he is dealing only with abstract masses and stresses; if he expresses himself in the art mannerism of Byzantium or India; if a Surrealist puts down on paper the irrational associations which come and are unquestionably accepted by the mind in the dream state; if a Fauvist abandons everything but a single vital line to express the idea he wishes to emphasise; if some other artist draws a boat looking rather like a toy boat than a real one, being concerned only with its decorative value and simplifying accordingly; or yet another expresses the essential nature of sunflowers by a riot of brilliant yellow paint around a central vortex of purple brown,



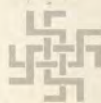




*By permission of Berkeley Galleries.*

### “PADMA PANI AND SCENES FROM LIFE OF BUDDHA ”

The East has inspired European artists not only through its sculpture, but in painting also. Buddhist art in China, Tibet, and Japan has given us some exquisite paintings on silk of scenes from the life of the Buddha and similar sacred themes. These, freed from our conceptions of perspective and representation, have an inspiring beauty.

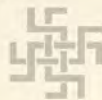


sacrificing for that emphasis on colour the exquisite lines of the sunflower form in nature ; if, in the last resource, the artist wishes to draw literally nothing on earth but only an abstract pattern of form and colour from the recesses of his own mind : if any or all of these things become an artist's intention, the door is open. This is freedom finding new laws, not merely licence abandoning the old ones.

For these principles of art, this freedom from our European tradition based on the Greeks as it was passed down to us at the time of the Renaissance, we have turned to the strangest sources, and everywhere have found fresh vision and methods. The first reaction to such newness has inevitably been one of mistaken comparison with our own European standards, but then it has been realised that these works are things of power and often of grace. Who can deny the lovely Bodhisattvas of Buddhist art their tenuous beauty ? The great Exhibitions of Chinese and of Persian Art held at the Royal Academy in the years before the war were revelations of new things created according to standards other than our own. We came to see that a figure might have a hundred arms and a dozen heads and yet not be monstrous, that a painting might be planned on a two-dimensional scheme and have arresting beauty. But we were forced to go further than this. Long before, Paris and then London had grasped the power of much absolutely primitive work, the magic sculpture of African tribesmen, of Maories, of South Sea Islanders. At one time Negro sculpture became a rage in Paris. Vlaminck and Derain were chief among its "discoverers." In truth, the time was ripe, as we have seen, for this extension of men's æsthetic vision.

Some recent exhibitions, particularly of sculpture, at the small Berkeley Galleries in London, have revealed anew to us the wealth which can come from such sources. One of Primitive Art from Africa, and the islands of the Southern Atlantic and Pacific, including New Zealand, was a wonderful demonstration of the evocative strength of the forms which these "savages" could create. The direct carving of wood and stone, and the decoration of handicraft had a beauty based on their own age-long traditions. At the same Galleries there was a further exhibition of Tibetan work, sculpture, paintings, and craftwork. Again it proclaimed new beauty, linking, as it did, the ancient culture of China with that of India. The excavations in Northern India, those in Mesopotamia, and all this opening up of the East and of the primitive peoples of the far islands has opened new doors to the artist who can now be sure that his audience will grasp new intentions and methods.

It has to be remembered in all this traffic with exotic forms and even more exotic ideas that these works were created as the expression of deep religious, community and social ideas. To the native of Africa or Polynesia they are linked with fertility ritual or devil worship in evocative magic or





taboo as the Hindu or Far Eastern work is linked with ancient Asian religious systems. To the European artist and lover of art such meanings do not exist, however interested anthropologists and ethnographers may be in them. The images come to us, therefore, as pure art forms : shapes, masses, patterns, lines, colours. Many of them are frankly hideous from the viewpoint of our conceptions based on Classic and Christian art, but others have a formal beauty and invariably there is the charm of fine craftsmanship. This distinction between outward form and inner meaning should be remembered if our acceptance of the new thing is to be sincere and not a mere cult.

Let it be granted that it also opens the door to charlatanism and deliberate eccentricity. That is always the price of freedom. It is for common sense to make its own bargains, to accept, reject, approve, or disregard. This has been the way of art throughout the ages.



## XXXVIII

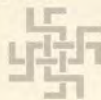
### ART IN THE 'THIRTIES

THE ROYAL ACADEMY, SOME INDEPENDENTS AND FRENCH PAINTERS

#### § I

IN the short interval between our wars, there has been much activity in art at home and abroad. One of the forms this expenditure of energy took in England was a movement within the Royal Academy to make the Annual Exhibitions more truly representative of the living art of the day. To this end a number of new Associates and Academicians were recruited from among the more famous members of the New English Art Club, and the work of others of lesser repute was accepted regularly for exhibition. Walter Richard Sickert, Augustus John, and the late William Orpen were the most famous new exhibitors in the early 'twenties. The art of these masters has already been described and it is only necessary here to record that national and private collections have been greatly enriched by their many masterpieces of the period. Among other well-known members of the Club who became associated with the Royal Academy, either officially or as exhibitors, were Ambrose McEvoy, Philip Connard, Stanley Spencer, Charles Cundall, and Henry Lamb.

Ambrose McEvoy was born in Wiltshire, at Crudwell, in 1878, and he died at the age of forty-eight in January, 1927. He entered the Slade School at the early age of fifteen, and his promise was immediately recognised by his teachers. In the beginning he steeped himself in the study of the Old Masters, and his first exhibits were small genre-paintings and sparkling little interiors rather in the manner of seventeenth-century Dutch art. Although he had considerable gifts as a landscape painter, it was as a portraitist that he became widely known. He has often been called the "twentieth-century Gainsborough," perhaps because of the air of delicate distinction and spirituality he imparted to his sitters. The title could not but please him, for he is quoted by R. H. Wilenski, the distinguished critic, as saying: "There are days when I think Gainsborough the greatest painter that ever lived." McEvoy's draughtsmanship is firm and decided, and this is apparent in even the most elusively iridescent of his paintings. He aimed at a very high degree of finish and worked many times over the





whole canvas. Yet there was nothing fixed or rigid about his work. The tale of the last brush-strokes McEvoy ever made illustrates vividly how flexible it was. "Only a few days before he died he saw how to give greater life and movement to the nearly finished portrait of Lady Wimborne, and with incredible swiftness and sureness, swept the broad lines of a new rhythm across the picture, so that the figure seems to move lightly across the field of vision ; and so the canvas remains, unfinished but alive, for he never touched a brush again."<sup>1</sup>

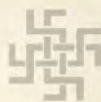
McEvoy's work is well-known outside England. Examples are in the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris and in the Johannesburg Gallery, and he visited America to execute several portrait commissions. His striking portrait of Ramsay MacDonald is now in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and one of his finest male portraits, that of Dr. James Ward, D.Sc., is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. But although he did several successful paintings of men, it is as a painter of women that he made his name, for the grace and charm of his style is peculiarly suited to femininity. There are ten of his works in the Tate Gallery, among them his last Academy exhibits, a portrait of Mrs. Claude Johnson, and a painting, presented by the Department of Overseas Trade, of the Searchlight Tattoo at Wembley. He was made an A.R.A. in 1924.

Another New English artist who became an Academician in the period is Philip Connard. His first reputation was made by his airy landscapes and sunny interiors, and then his luminous portrait groups earned him wider recognition. Of recent years he has produced much purely decorative work, and the name "Connard" now calls to mind at once one of those charming panels on which, in pale sweet colours, birds and flowers display their fragile grace. A happy use of his decorative gifts is seen in the set of paintings of royal castles he executed for the adornment of the room at Windsor which contains the Queen's Doll's House.

Soon after the Armistice Stanley Spencer began to exhibit at the New English his strange new art, and in the intervening period he has been in, and out again, of the Academy. He studied at the Slade School, and went through the first World War, and he has contributed officially to the War Records.

Stanley Spencer's æsthetic forbears are the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and the chief source of his inspiration when he began to paint was the New Testament. He illustrated the Gospel stories in an unorthodox manner, however, for he used the village of Cookham in Surrey, where he lived, for their setting, and present-day villagers in clumsy modern clothes as participants in the sacred scenes. Thus, in "The Visitation," an early work, the Virgin was shown as a servant-girl in cotton frock and

<sup>1</sup> "Painters of England," by S. G. Kaines Smith.

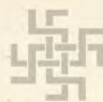




"MRS. CLAUDE JOHNSON," BY AMBROSE McEVOY

Tate Gallery

Presented to the nation by the sitter in memory of her husband, this luminous painting is a characteristic example of the artist's skill in feminine portraiture. McEvoy is chiefly known for his fine series of oils of beautiful and distinguished women, but he also experimented with much success in portrait sketches in water-colour. He was a pupil of Professor Brown at the Slade School, and after his student days was associated with John and Sickert. He died, at a comparatively early age, in 1927.







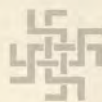
*Reproduced by permission of the Artist.*

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# "THE RESURRECTION," BY STANLEY SPENCER

Burghclere Memorial Chapel

This large altar-piece is one of the most striking mural paintings of the era. In his treatment of the subject the artist has used to the full his remarkable talent for investing a mystical event with something of the appearance of a familiar phenomenon. It is as though yet one more *Reveille* has just sounded in ears that have heard so many, and once again the camp begins to stir, for a new day has come.



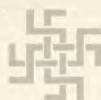
apron, calling at a typical Surrey cottage ; and in "Christ Carrying the Cross," the Via Dolorosa runs between iron railings by red brick villas. In this last painting symbolism is mixed with realism, as befits the subject.

About seventeen or more years ago, Stanley Spencer showed a collection of drawings and designs for a War Memorial Chapel, which existed only in his imagination ; but there it had a very real existence, for the whole project was most elaborately worked out. The drawings were both decorative and dramatic, and the immediate result of their exhibition was such as few present-day artists would dare to hope for. Mr. J. L. Behrend decided to build a Memorial Chapel to the specified requirements and to commission the artist to decorate it. The chapel was built at Burghclere in Hampshire. Its mural decoration was finished in 1933. There can be no doubt that this is one of the major events in the history of native art during the last two decades.

The artist served in Macedonia from 1914 to 1918, and for most of the time as hospital orderly. He has drawn on his memory of those years for subject-matter. The paintings cover three walls ; their subjects include war scenes and life in hospital. Behind the altar on the central wall is a large painting, "The Resurrection." The paintings are full of detail, but there is nothing sensational or morbid about the scenes chosen. They are vivid records of remembered scenes and they are also very decorative works of art. It is only in the large central picture that the artist has allowed his imagination full rein. Macedonia is the scene of the Resurrection. The soldiers are shown waking slowly from their long sleep. In the foreground are the heaped crosses ; in the far distance the unknown goal.

It took several years to complete the work and while it was in progress Spencer also executed a number of other important paintings. About 1926 he painted the eighteen-foot "Resurrection of the Dead," now in the Tate Gallery, which was the cause of much comment when first seen. The Burghclere version of the same subject is entirely different in design. Another beautiful work (some think it the most beautiful of all the artist's paintings) was also done while the chapel decoration was going forward. This is the long narrow landscape, "Cottages at Burghclere," now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. The exquisitely rendered detail, enamelled brilliance of colouring, and enhanced realism of the whole composition make this painting one of the most memorable achievements of our time.

Stanley Spencer was made an Associate of the Royal Academy, but he resigned several years ago following a difference of opinion with the Selection Committee concerning a painting he sent for exhibition.



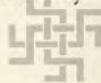


Charles Cundall's career was also interrupted by war service, and he was hampered for a long time by the results of a wound in his right arm. Nevertheless he managed to paint so effectively that he was elected to the New English Art Club and some years later made an A.R.A. He is Lancashire born and Slade trained. His successes have been obtained in fresh, brightly coloured pictures of contemporary life. Football and tennis matches, the Coronation and Barnet Fair, London parks and squares have all provided him with subjects well-suited to his mood. One of his major works, "The Demolition of Waterloo Bridge," was exhibited in the Academy in 1936, and it is now of historic interest as the beautiful bridge has gone. "Chelsea *versus* Arsenal at Stamford Bridge," painted in 1937, is a "documentary" which achieves æsthetic beauty.

The achievements of Henry Lamb as a painter in the Great War have already been considered. His work was first seen at Burlington House in the 'twenties. At one time his paintings showed a lively medley of very bright clean colours, but later their colour-schemes grew more orthodox and restrained. He is chiefly known for his portraits and portrait groups; the latter are true "conversation pieces," and full of psychological interest. Two of his early works each had a sensational success: the poignant "Death of a Peasant," a most moving portrayal of grief, and the famous portrait of the late Lytton Strachey, author of *Eminent Victorians*, which was on loan for many years to the Tate Gallery. He was elected A.R.A. in 1940.

Among those artists whose careers have been closely identified with Academy successes, and whose reputations have greatly increased during the past twenty years, are the Royal Academicians, A. J. Munnings, now President of the R.A., Gerald Brockhurst, and the late Glyn Philpot.

The art of A. J. Munnings, R.A., has a secure place in public esteem. His large painting, "The Prince of Wales on Forest Witch," which was the Academy sensation in 1921, ushered in the most successful phase of his career. Since that date his work has attained a world-wide reputation, and to its popularity to some extent is due the newly revived interest in English sporting pictures. Alfred J. Munnings was born in 1878 at Mendham, in Suffolk, where his father, like Constable's, was a miller. After schooldays at Framlingham College he was apprenticed to a printer in Norwich, but soon he was attending the local School of Art, where he studied poster-designing as well as painting. Some thirty years later a loan exhibition was held in Norwich Castle of the works of the one-time printer's apprentice, and every phase of his work was represented there, from his first childish drawings to "The Drummer," a sketch in oils which was sold in the same year for £1300. He has shown at the Academy





"KILKENNY HORSE FAIR," BY ALFRED J. MUNNINGS

This brilliant work shows Sir Alfred Munnings in his threefold power as a supreme painter of horses, as a landscape artist, and as an impressionist able to catch the poses of the figures in a crowd under the light of a given moment. Every slightest touch of the brush leaves an impression of a person or animal caught in significant movement, and the crowded scene is yet realised as one single unity.



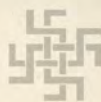


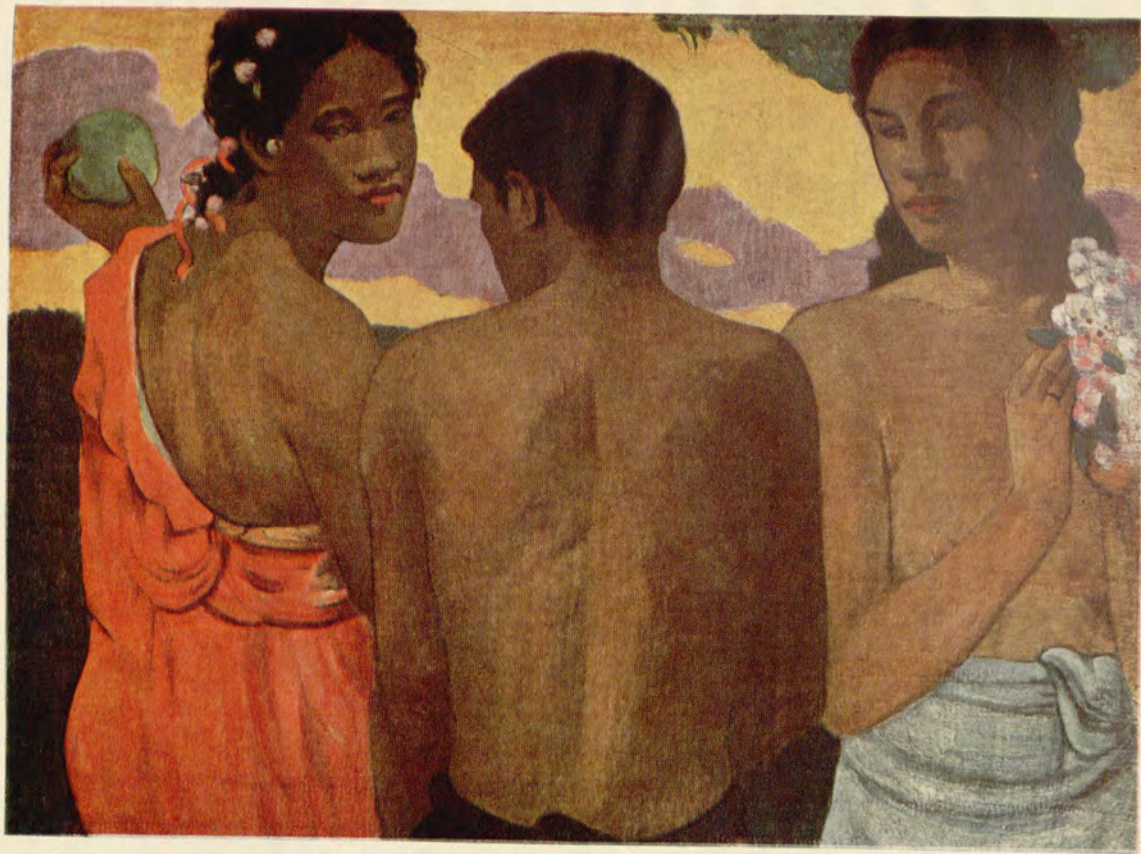
*By permission of the Trustees of the Lady Lever Collection.*

*L. Card.*

**"JEUNESSE DORÉE," BY GERALD BROCKHURST**

In this fine portrait of a beautiful, grave young girl may be seen the aesthetic qualities and the masterly technique which have made the artist one of the most admired and fashionable portraitists of the day. The decorative values of modern dress have seldom been more happily emphasised than in Brockhurst's compositions. Among his successes are his portraits of the Duchess of Windsor and the Countess Haugwitz-Reventlow. He has also won distinction as an etcher of figure subjects, and had produced some exquisite pencil portrait drawings.



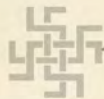


“THE THREE TAHITIANS,” BY GAUGUIN

Alex. Maitland Collection, Edinburgh

*Reproduced by courtesy of the Owner.*

This calmly beautiful work was painted when Gauguin had returned to Tahiti, ill, poor and in a mood of utter revolt and despair at the death of his daughter Aline. Yet he could create this rich simplicity of form and colour, for there among the primitive people he discovered a fundamental beauty and some sort of meaning to life.







*Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery.*

**"ENNUI," BY WALTER RICHARD SICKERT**

Tate Gallery, London

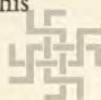
Few artists of recent times have shown the enormous versatility in subject and in medium of Sickert, but perhaps he is best represented by that line of democratic painting which made him so great an influence with the Camden Town Group. In this picture he expresses in a daringly built-up design the utter boredom of Sunday afternoon in a working-class home. This was a new kind of realism, touched with pity and humour

every year since he was twenty, and in 1920 he was made an R.A. During the 1914-18 war he executed forty-five war pictures for the Canadian Government. He is a keen huntsman and race-goer, and it is not surprising, therefore, that he has been moved to depict the grace and beauty of race-horses and thoroughbreds. He has also an appreciative eye for the natural loveliness of the English scene, and to this we owe a very pleasant series of landscapes in fresh and lively colour.

Gerald Brockhurst is another artist who has consolidated his position as a gifted portrait painter and etcher during these last years. The longevity and vitality of the Pre-Raphaelite tradition is borne witness to in his early work. He received his first training at the Birmingham School of Art, where he came under the influence of Southall and Gaskin; afterwards he entered the Royal Academy Schools. He was made an A.R.A. in 1928, and an Academician ten years later.

It has been said that his portraits evoke Renaissance Italy, and certainly his impeccable draughtsmanship and the deep-toned clarity of his colour recall the Italian mode. Also, in some of his admirable half-length portraits he has used the fascinating Renaissance convention of giving emphasis to the subject and depth to the canvas by painting in miniature landscapes as the far-away background. And then, again, he invests his sitters with a dignity and aloofness which recall the life and mood of a more spacious age than ours. His portrait of Henry Rushbury, R.A., painted in 1929, which is now in Philadelphia, remains one of his most striking successes. Brockhurst has chosen to paint his fellow-artist at his most characteristic, while he is at work, and it is the portrait of an artist intent upon his "subject" that he shows us, and not merely the features of his friend. "Young Womanhood," of 1931, "Jeunesse Dorée," of 1934, and "Armida," of 1936, are typical of his best work. He has also made another reputation for his masterly pencil portraits and portrait etchings.

Although he was an Academician for many years, Glyn Philpot went through several phases in the course of his career. In none of them did he depart markedly from academic tradition, except perhaps in the last (he died in 1938), when he was drawn to experiment in the Impressionist manner. He studied at the Lambeth School of Art, and then in Rouen and Paris, but contemporary French art hardly interested him. At any rate, it left no mark on his style of painting for almost the whole of his career. At first he painted symbolical subjects; such was his "Pilgrimage of the Soul." After a phase of realism, he returned to religion for inspiration, and produced, among many in this genre, his well-known "Threefold Epiphany" and "Annunciation." In portraiture he also had much success. His later style aroused some comment among his





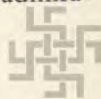
admirers, but to the non-academic mind there is nothing very revolutionary about it.

R. O. Dunlop was made an A.R.A. as late as 1939, but his reputation as a talented artist who was extraordinarily adept with the palette knife, has been steadily growing during the last decade. At one time he produced still-lives and over-life-size heads, rather sombre in colour, and the surfaces of these, covered with an extremely thick crust of paint, were very rough and uneven; but the colour has cleared and the surface grown smoother as technical difficulties were overcome. The artist was born in 1894, in Dublin, of Scottish parents. He went to the Manchester and the Wimbledon Schools of Art. His work is in the Tate Gallery and in some of the provincial galleries, and an example has been acquired by a public gallery in New South Wales. Dunlop's reputation as a fine portraitist has been recently growing.

Two painters who look out on the twentieth-century scene with the eyes of disciples of Crome and Cotman, or Richard Wilson, have gained an appreciative public within the recent past. Of the two, widest recognition has come to Algernon Newton, who was made an A.R.A. in 1935. It was about ten years or more earlier that this accomplished artist began to show at Burlington House his serenely beautiful pictures of London canals, which to many were a revelation of the neglected beauty of the capital. These glazed, meticulously finished, clear-tinted paintings were something quite new in contemporary art—to find anything like them one had to go back at least a hundred years—and their success was immediate. Later, in the same mood and manner, the artist produced a number of remarkably fine river scenes and a series of dignified paintings of country houses seen in their right setting of spacious parks.

Bertram Nicholls also draws his chief inspiration from the British landscape painters of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He works usually on a small canvas, and he has re-discovered with signal success the charm of carefully applied varnish as the final surface of his pictures. His colour is dark-toned and liquid, his compositions quiet and mellow in mood, his subject-matter at one time Provence and the Roman Campagna, but more often of late years the peaceful face of Southern England. Nicholls studied at the Slade School and in Madrid and France. Two of his works are in the Tate, one has gone to the National Gallery of Canada, and others are in the principal provincial galleries.

Of the thousand and more exhibits which are seen at Burlington House every summer, portraits by the Royal Academicians, W. G. de Glehn, Francis Dodd, and Gerald Kelly, and landscapes by Arnesby Brown, A. K. Lawrence, and George Henry will always be singled out for admira-



tion, for each of these distinguished artists has his well-established place in the art of our time.

A notable feature of Academy policy during the past twenty years is the recognition extended to women painters. Mrs. A. L. Swynnerton (who was born only seven years after Victoria came to the throne), was admitted as Associate in 1922, and thus became the first woman since the eighteenth century to be so favoured. The next feminine recipient of official honours was Laura Knight, who became A.R.A. in 1927. Since that date she has been made a Dame of the British Empire, and a Royal Academician. Mrs. Knight is chiefly known for her large-scale vigorous paintings of circus and ballet-life. "Charivari," into which she has managed to crowd very amusingly all the characters of the circus; "Ballet Girl and Dressmaker," acquired by Mr. Earl Hoover of Chicago; "London Palladium," a strikingly composed theatre interior; and "Circus Matinée" are the titles of some well-known and characteristic works.

A third woman Associate is Dod Procter, who attained that status in 1934. From her home in the artists' colony at Newlyn in Cornwall, Mrs. Procter sent regularly to the Academy without attracting marked attention until 1925, when her emphatic painting, "The Model," created a stir; then, in 1927, the public at large was made to realise her existence when her *tour de force*, a full-length of a sleeping girl, entitled "Morning," had a sensational success and was bought by the proprietors of the *Daily Mail* for presentation to the nation. Before being lodged in the Tate the picture was sent on tour in the provinces. The figures in all this artist's work are highly modelled, solid, three-dimensional. A characteristic feature is the pallor of her flesh tints. In "Morning," the broad passages of blue-white in which the linen is rendered combine with the pale flesh tones to make a novel harmony. Of late, Mrs. Procter's work has grown softer and gentler in outline and atmosphere.

One of our most distinguished woman painters was not similarly honoured until April 1940, when she was elected A.R.A. Ethel Walker, elected a member of the New English Art Club as long ago as 1900, and exhibitor at Burlington House for many years, has produced a long series of very beautiful sea pieces, flower studies, and portraits in her own luminous version of Impressionism. Professor Frederick Brown, Slade Professor at University College, has placed her "among the few really great colourists of the day." The artist has also made several large-scale decorations, drawing on Homeric subjects for inspiration. "Nausicaa," now in the Tate Gallery, is one of the best known of these. Miss Walker was made a C.B.E. within the last few years.







*Reproduced by permission of the Artist.*

*A. G. Cooper.*

**"Ballet Girl and Dressmaker," BY LAURA KNIGHT**

In the possession of Mr. Earl Hoover of Chicago

Laura Knight has been exhibiting at Burlington House since 1903, and her pictures enjoy immense popularity. "Ballet Girl and Dressmaker," which was shown at the Royal Academy in 1930, is indeed a masterpiece of modern realism. Laura Knight is equally expert with water-colours as with oils.

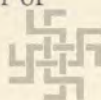
## § 2

Meanwhile, outside the Royal Academy, work of the first importance in the history of native art was being shown at the London Group exhibitions. The London Group was formed shortly before the 1914-18 war by a band of artists who were dissatisfied with the policy of the New English Art Club. Among its original members were Sickert, Spencer Gore, Robert Bevan, Epstein, Wyndham Lewis, Charles Ginner, and Harold Gilman. Its first president was Harold Gilman (whose lovely "Leeds Market" and "Canal Bridge" now hang in the Tate Gallery), and he held that office until his untimely death in the influenza epidemic of the black spring of 1919. Gilman's close friend was Ginner, with whom he had held a joint exhibition at the Goupil Gallery soon after the London Group was formed. The catalogue of this far-away venture is of great interest now, for it contains as foreword a reprint of an article written by Ginner for the *New Age*, in which he set forth with admirable lucidity the credo of certain of the founders of the London Group, who were, incidentally, some of the finest non-academic realistic artists of our time. They called themselves Neo-realists—but not very seriously, and rather as a joke aimed at the current fashion for labels. Ginner put their standpoint quite clearly :

It is the common opinion of the day, especially in Paris (even Paris can make mistakes at times) that Decoration is the unique aim of Art. Neo-Realism, based on its tradition of Realism, has another aim of equal importance. . . . It must interpret that which, to us who are of this earth, ought to lie nearest our hearts, *i.e.*, Life in all its effects, moods, and developments. Each age has its landscapes, its atmosphere, its cities, its people. Realism . . . interpret its epoch by extracting from it the very essence of all it contains of great or weak, of beautiful or sordid, according to the individual temperament. . . .

Thus, with intelligence and assurance, a stand was made against what was considered by these artists to be the growing emptiness, incoherence, and incomprehensibility of much of the art of the day.

Charles Ginner has remained faithful to the tenets of his æsthetic creed in the quarter century that has elapsed since he formulated it with his friends, Spencer Gore, Harold Gilman, and Robert Bevan. Ginner was born and educated at Cannes, in the south of France. When he grew up he entered an architect's office in Paris, but he soon left this for the atelier of the Spanish painter, Anglada. His first exhibition was held in Buenos Aires, and it was not until he was over thirty that he settled in England, where his work instantly attracted the sympathetic attention of





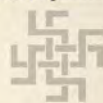


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*A. G. Cooper.*

**"ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, CHESTER," BY CHARLES GINNER**

Intricacy of design combined with great subtlety of colour harmonies are outstanding characteristics of this artist's work. These qualities are superbly illustrated in this beautiful composition. Though he was for many years a member of the Sickert Circle, Ginner, who has been a pupil in Paris of the Spaniard Anglada Camarasa, has never in his painting shown any sign of being influenced by Sickert. His work exhibits rather a curious blend of pre-Raphaelite precision of detail with the colour passion of Van Gogh.

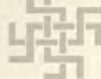


his fellow-artists. Since then he has steadily continued to paint in his own peculiarly individual way. New movements interest him, but he has always been too sure of what he wanted to do and how he wished to do it, to waste time and energy in useless experiment. His subject-matter is often the commonplace: rows of slate-roofed houses, suburban streets with tram-lines, London back gardens, dockyards. And as often it is the infinitely varied face of Nature: fields and woods, the downs and the sea. Traces of his short architectural training may be noted in his orderly method of dealing with design. In all his work there is chromatic richness, satisfying composition, and superb handling of detail. Paintings by him have been acquired by many of the provincial galleries, as well as by the Tate Gallery, and examples of his remarkable water-colour drawings are in the British Museum and in the Victoria and Albert Museum. His painting of St. John's Church, Chester, is an excellent example of his style.

An early member of the London Group, and one of the youngest, was John Nash, who has become so widely known for his lovely interpretations of English rural beauty. John Nash began by producing amusing water-colours, which were very unsophisticated in manner and naïvely drawn. This gaucherie was to be expected, for the artist never attended any art school. At first, the lack of an orthodox training hampered the full development of his gifts, but his isolation from the schools and coteries has also served to preserve unimpaired the freshness and individuality of his vision. During the last decade he has come to be recognised as one of our very finest landscape painters in oil and water-colour. He has also made two other reputations, one as a book-illustrator of great comic gifts, and another for his superb engravings and water-colours of flowers and plants. John Nash is well represented in the national collection and was one of the two official war artists appointed by the Air Ministry early in 1940.

Ethelbert White, member of the N.E.A.C. and one-time member of the London group, has drawn his inspiration largely from his native land. In his early work he showed affinities with John Nash, but these soon disappeared as he found himself. He has developed an attractive personal style which is very well suited to the rendering of English landscape, and particularly of wood scenes. "Over the Hills," in the Tate Gallery, is a good example of his painting.

The London Group was greatly expanded during the early 'twenties, mainly through the enthusiasm and initiative of Roger Fry, the well-known critic and painter. As a result of this influx of new life, small groups, chiefly under the pronounced influence of contemporary French artists, were formed within the society. Duncan Grant was the nucleus, and Vanessa Bell, Mark Gertler, Matthew Smith, Keith Baynes, and Frederick



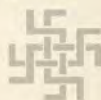


Porter other adherents of the group to which Roger Fry was chiefly attached by æsthetic sympathies.

Duncan Grant was born in Rothiemurchus, Inverness, in 1885, and he studied art at the Westminster School of Art and in Paris. Roger Fry gave him his benediction from the outset of his career. The critic was at that time conducting, in a lovely old Adams house in Fitzroy Square, the Omega Workshop for applied art, and it was natural that Grant, with his marked gifts for decorative design, should join Fry's talented company of artists and craftsmen. So, for a short period, he was employed designing textiles and pottery. Fry included some of his paintings in the Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition held at the Grafton Galleries in 1913. About this time the artist was commissioned, with others, to do murals for the Borough Polytechnic, some of his designs for which are now in the Tate Gallery. It was as a purely decorative artist that Duncan Grant first made his name—arabesques of sweet creamy colour flowed from his brush with charming effect whatever the subject-matter—but, as his work matured, mere decoration ceased to occupy him exclusively and his beautiful paintings gained in atmosphere, solidity, and depth. For many years now Duncan Grant has been generally recognised as our most gifted and accomplished exponent of Post-Impressionism. The influence of Cézanne hovers over his work as a whole, but this does not cause his style to be any the less individual. He is one of the small body of British painters whose work commands respect in Paris at the present time. An interesting example of his early manner is the Tate exhibit, "The Queen of Sheba," painted on wood.

Vanessa Bell was also closely connected with Roger Fry in the Omega Workshop days and later, when he turned his attention to the London Group. She is the daughter of the well-known Victorian man of letters, Sir Leslie Stephen, and sister of the famous woman writer, Virginia Woolf. Her æsthetic sympathies have always been with the French Post-Impressionist school, and although she has experimented, she has never been drawn to follow the extremists. She has collaborated agreeably with Duncan Grant in decorative work. Their "Modern Music Room" caused a stir when it was shown at the Lefevre Gallery. It was the target for much amusing, and some indignant, criticism—but then, that has been the fate of a great deal of modern art. In common with Duncan Grant, Mrs. Bell has been working towards a more realistic and less stylised manner of painting for several years now. Her flower-paintings (one was bought by the Contemporary Art Society for the nation) show her gifts at their most charming.

Mark Gertler's work also has an important place in the art of the epoch. This talented Jewish artist was born in 1892, and he died, aged forty-six,



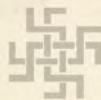


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"PROVENÇAL LANDSCAPE," BY DUNCAN GRANT

There is always something mellow and satisfying about this painter's landscapes, and especially in his paintings of Southern France. In this picture of Cézanne's country, the Midi, with its glowing colour and the finely rounded forms of the rolling fields, one is made to feel the richness and fertility of the sun-drenched earth.

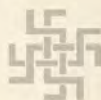


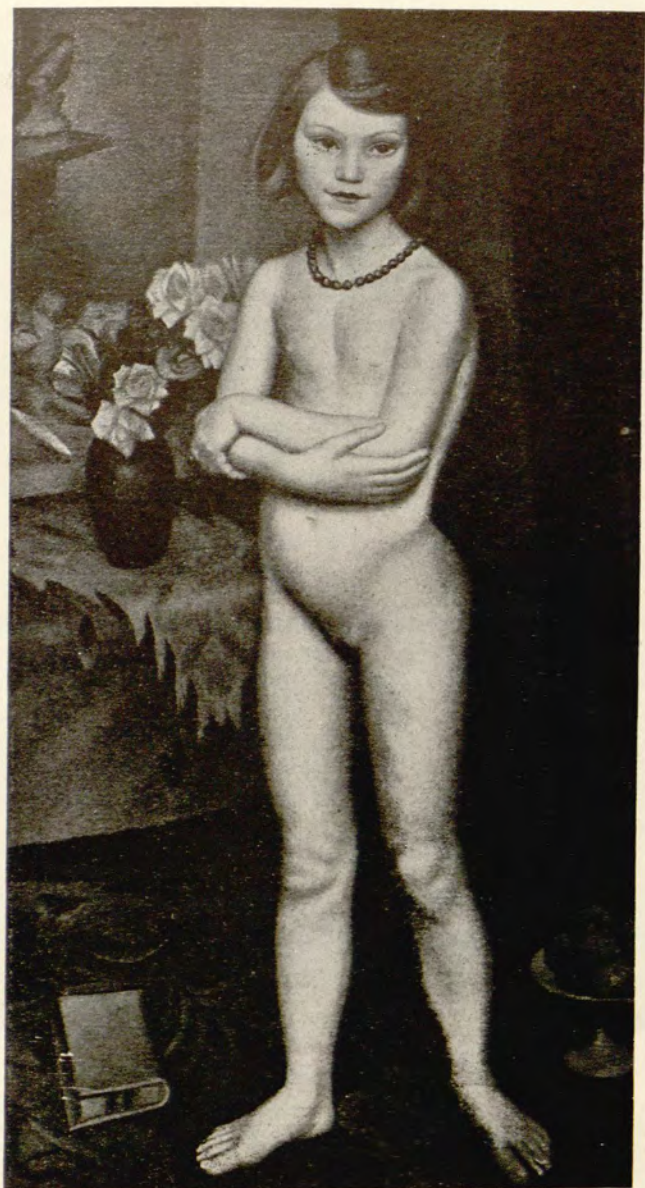


in 1938. In his early circumstances there was much struggle and hardship. The winning of the Slade scholarship in 1911, and that of the British Institute a year later, momentarily solved material difficulties and brought him to the notice of a number of artists and art-patrons who greatly encouraged him. The Contemporary Art Society bought his "Fruit Sorters" while he was still practically a student. He had always a taste for very rich, and even garish colour, and a highly developed sense of form. In the main he was a realist who liked his reality flamboyant and exuberant. Street fruit-stalls under flaring lights, and merry-go-rounds were youthful favourites as subjects. Later, his work shed something of its first gaudiness and he produced in a low-toned colour-scale highly finished compositions, in which his handling of the pigment gave a curiously liquid effect to the surface. It was as though one looked at a Gertler painting through a film of clear water which heightened the colours without distorting the forms. There was often something monumental and static in his figure groups and portraits. The well-remembered "Coster Family," and the fine portrait of the artist's mother evince these qualities admirably. The full-length nude of a girl of fourteen or fifteen, "Young Girlhood," is a well-known and representative example of his art at its surest. His later experiments in the *surréaliste* manner were not very successful. The Tate Gallery has acquired one of his paintings, and his portrait of Sir George Darwin is in the National Portrait Gallery.

Akin to Gertler in his love of warm-hued pigment is Matthew Smith, whose first work was shown in the London Group in the 'twenties. Matthew Smith did not begin to paint until he was over forty. He was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, in 1879. The first part of his adult life was spent in business, for like Gauguin, he postponed the beginning of his real career until he had entered early middle life. But, as with Gauguin, there never was a doubt that painting was his true vocation. His preference is for the utmost exuberance of colour, and this led him at one period to produce a remarkable series of nudes, in which the flesh-tints of the well-rounded models had been translated into flaming scarlet and ruby. As his art developed the necessity to express himself in such chromatic extremes lessened, and the crimson flesh grew gradually rosy, and then became beautifully golden. Later, Matthew Smith turned to landscape, to the interpretation of which he brings the same dash and brilliance that characterise his flower studies and nudes.

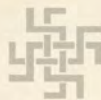
Other British artists who do not fit very exactly into any particular group or category now, and who have achieved well-established reputations are Edward Wadsworth and William Roberts. Wadsworth and Roberts were allied with Wyndham Lewis and the Vorticists at one time, but each went his own way early in his career.



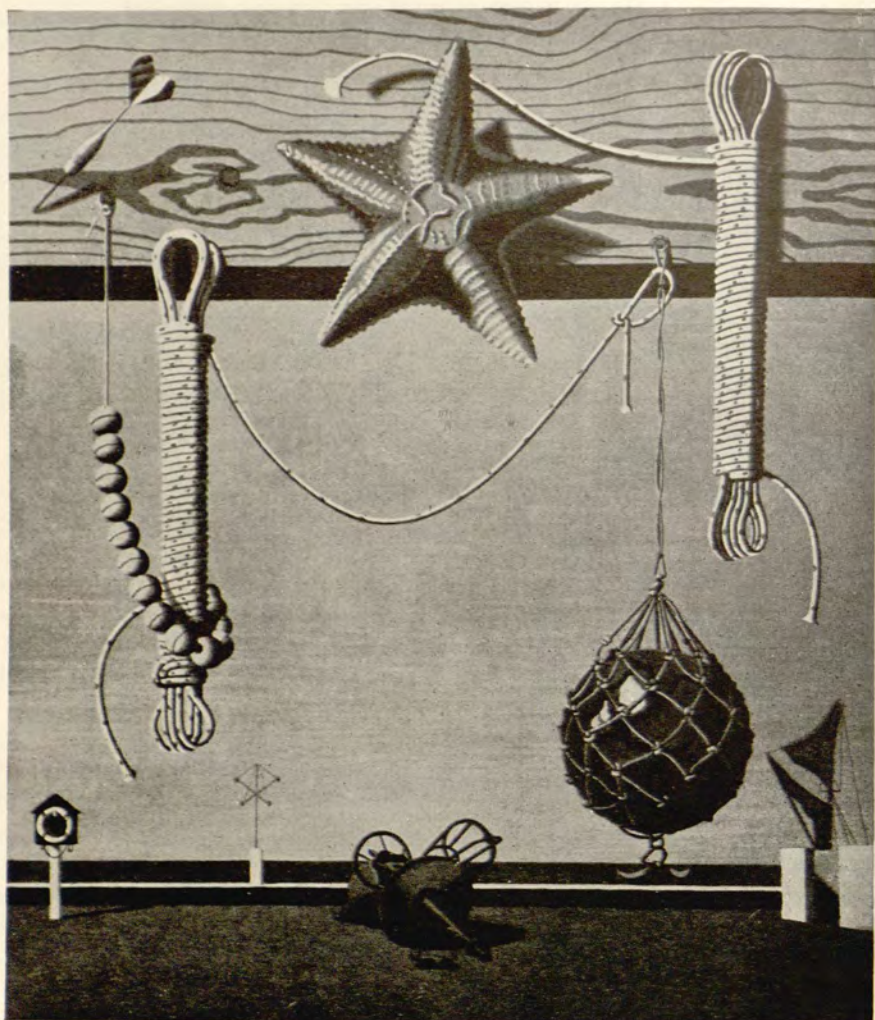


"GIRLHOOD," BY MARK GERTLER

Mark Gertler succeeded in many fields of art. When he was quite young the perfectly depicted study of his room in Spitalfields and a portrait of his mother created a sensation by their quality. Later he turned his powers to such exquisite and firmly modelled studies as this, and to flower painting in the same vein of stylised naturalism.



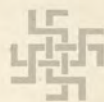




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**"MARINE SET," BY EDWARD WADSWORTH**

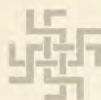
Wadsworth's art is evocative. He has chosen to turn to the objects of the sea for his subjects, and to assemble them on his canvasses according to his own desires as a designer. He presents them with strong drawing and clean, brittle colour, so that the mind of the beholder reacts immediately to his sea-mood, though there is no naturalistic seascape.



Edward Wadsworth was born in Yorkshire in 1889, and his art studies were conducted in Edinburgh and Munich and at the Slade School. About 1922 he began to experiment with painting in tempera, and got such satisfactory results that he has used this medium ever since. During the next three years he produced some attractive pictures of ships in harbour, only slightly stylised in drawing; and then came a series of paintings which were quite unlike anything his English contemporaries were doing. They were still lifes, in which against a flatly painted stretch of sky and sea (often there was a minute white-sailed ship on the horizon), were grouped some lovely shells, bits of cork or rope, perhaps an anchor, a lifebelt or a screw, or some other mysterious marine object, and the whole collection was rendered with the utmost precision of detail, and in exquisite light sweet colour. "Regatta" is an excellent example of this style of painting. Then, for a time, Wadsworth's compositions became quite unrepresentational, and on his paintings were shown dynamic shapes, strongly suggestive of movement and excitement. Later, the artist returned to a more realistic manner, but his imagination still lingers about the incidents of marine life—perhaps because of his naval experience in the Great War. There are works by him in the Tate Gallery and in some of the chief provincial galleries. He was one of the artists chosen to represent English art at the Biennial International Art Exhibition which, but for the outbreak of war, was to have been held in Venice in 1940.

William Roberts won a scholarship to the Slade when he was sixteen. His work has always shown cubist tendencies, and at one time the figures in his compositions resembled robots, but they have gradually grown more human. Emphasis is on design in his virile semi-realistic paintings, and there is a marked ironic note in all his work. "Sun Bathers" is an excellent example of his matured art. A painting by him is in the national collection.

Cedric Morris is another independent who is a member of the London Group. He is self-taught, which may account for his originality, for he has invented a particular genre of bird and flower painting. His landscapes also have much charm and novelty. Insects and butterflies busy among the flowers, and even small birds sipping the honey from the blossoms are often included in his flower paintings, with vivacious effect. But it is for his studies of wild birds in their natural surroundings that this artist is particularly known. "Night Jars" is a typical example. These are done largely from memory, being worked up from notes. Often the marvellous beauty of the birds is shown against a distant landscape, with grasses and pebbles, or fragments of rock, making a close-patterned foreground. The colour is bright and clean and the workmanship detailed and careful.







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**"LANDSCAPE," BY CHRISTOPHER WOOD**

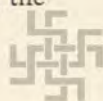
Christopher Wood reduced the objects before his eyes to their utmost simplicity of form and colour for the purpose of his design. All art is a choice of the essential things which will convey truth or beauty, and in this Breton landscape the artist has organised those essentials into a charming composition.

A little reminiscent of Cedric Morris in the bright vividness of its colour is the work of a young artist who died at Salisbury in 1930, aged twenty-nine. Christopher Wood was born at Knowsley, near Liverpool, in 1901. He studied art at Julian's in Paris, and later made friends with Picasso and Jean Cocteau. In 1926 he was commissioned by Diaghlieff to design the costumes and *décor* for a ballet, which project was afterwards abandoned. By 1929 he had had two one-man shows, and had shared the honours with Ben Nicholson of an exhibition entitled, "Deux Peintres Anglais," at the famous Bernheim Galleries in Paris. In the same year C. B. Cochran asked him to do the *décor* and costumes for a ballet. Before the commission could be carried out the artist was dead. After his Memorial Exhibition in 1932, a characteristic painting, "Brittany Landscape," was accepted by the Tate Gallery. Christopher Wood specialised in small brilliantly coloured paintings of harbour scenes, fishing boats, and Breton fisherfolk. "Seascape, Brittany, 1929" shows his art at its surest. Although his talent had not time to mature, the work he has left entitles him to a place in contemporary British art.

A New Zealand born artist who came to Europe to study art before the last war, and in the years since has brought her gifts to fruition, is Frances Hodgkins. Miss Hodgkins' decorative Post-Impressionism has long been known to the more discriminating amateurs, but she has had to wait until comparatively recently for the admiring appreciation of a wider circle.

In 1937 a war novel, *In Parenthesis*, won the Hawthornden Prize for literature. It was written by an artist who had been wounded at the Battle of the Somme while serving with the Welsh Fusiliers during the Great War. The book was illustrated by the author but the prize was awarded for its literary merit. Thus David Jones added a second reputation to the one he had already gained as an extremely subtle and delicate water-colourist. His 1940 London exhibition was a triumphant success. In spite of the adverse conditions of the times, most of the exhibits were acquired by collectors within the first few days of its opening. Four of the water-colours were secured for the nation by the Tate Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the British Museum.

There is not space here to describe the work of several other British artists which has attracted much attention and admiration within the period. It is only possible in this short account to name a few of the better-known painters not already referred to, and from whom, judging by past successes, interesting and distinguished work may be expected in the future; such are Bernard Meninsky, Gilbert Spencer, Ivon Hitchens, Vivian Pitchforth, Richard Eurich, Evan Kirke, James Fitton, Raymond Coxon, Robin Wallace, John Piper, and Edward Le Bas; and among the





younger generation, William Coldstream and Victor Pasmore, Anthony Devas and Rodrigo Moynihan.

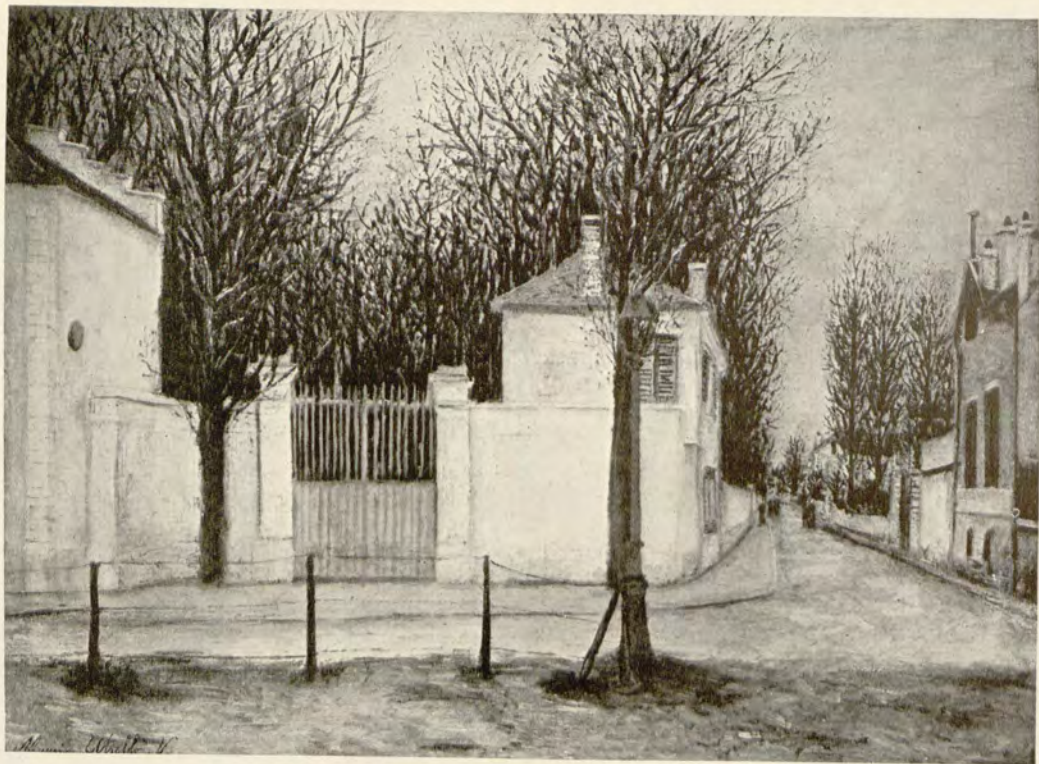
## § 3

During the past quarter-century world-wide fame has been achieved by a brilliant company of French artists, many of whom are, to within a few years, of the same generation.

André Derain, whose name first became widely known in England when crowds flocked to applaud the Russian ballet, "La Boutique Fantasque"—he had designed the *décor* and costumes—has an eminent place in this confraternity. Derain was born in 1880. He intended to be an engineer, but took up painting instead. His first master was Carrière, but the strongest influence of his early days was his friendship with Vlaminck. Together they discovered negro sculpture, which has given such a powerful stimulus to a certain school of modern art. Derain was one of the Fauves, and in touch with all the "advanced" movements, but his natural tendency to direct statement was reinforced by his great admiration for Cézanne. His paintings have solidity and coherence, and they are realistic without being naturalistic.

His lifelong friend and fellow-artist, Maurice de Vlaminck, is credited with having been a professional motor cyclist, a violinist, a popular novelist, and a worker in the Sèvres porcelain factory before becoming a painter. When he did settle down to art, however, he succeeded in inventing and developing a very original style. His landscapes have a stormy and dramatic quality, due largely to his brilliant handling of light and shade in deep-toned greens, scarlet, black, and white. Referring to academic painting he has written: "I flee from the monotony, the severity, the very smell of picture galleries." So it is not surprising that he, too, was at one time a Fauve!

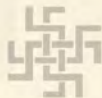
Paintings by Dunoyer de Segonzac began to appear frequently at mixed exhibitions in this country in the 'twenties. He was born in 1884, and his career had just got under way by 1914. His war service consisted in directing camouflage in the French lines. Before the 1914-18 war he had been a pupil of Jacques Emile Blanche and had travelled extensively in Spain, Italy, and Africa. He has always been a vigorous realist. He lays his paint on very thickly and his special preference is for wide flat country in landscape, and for extremely well-rounded forms in nudes. His work is sent regularly to the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne, and he has designed theatrical costumes which Poiret, the famous costumier, has carried out. In the latter's memoirs is described how Poiret found in the artist's studio an unstretched canvas thrown away as rubbish, which



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**"PAYSAGE DE BONLIEUE," BY MAURICE UTRILLO**

At one time Utrillo was so fascinated by the prosaic streets of little French towns, villages, and suburbs, with their strings of small shops and grimy whitish houses, that he would paint nothing else. Hence the many well-known canvases of what has come to be called his "white period." The "V" of the signature (often missing) is for his mother's name, Vallodon.



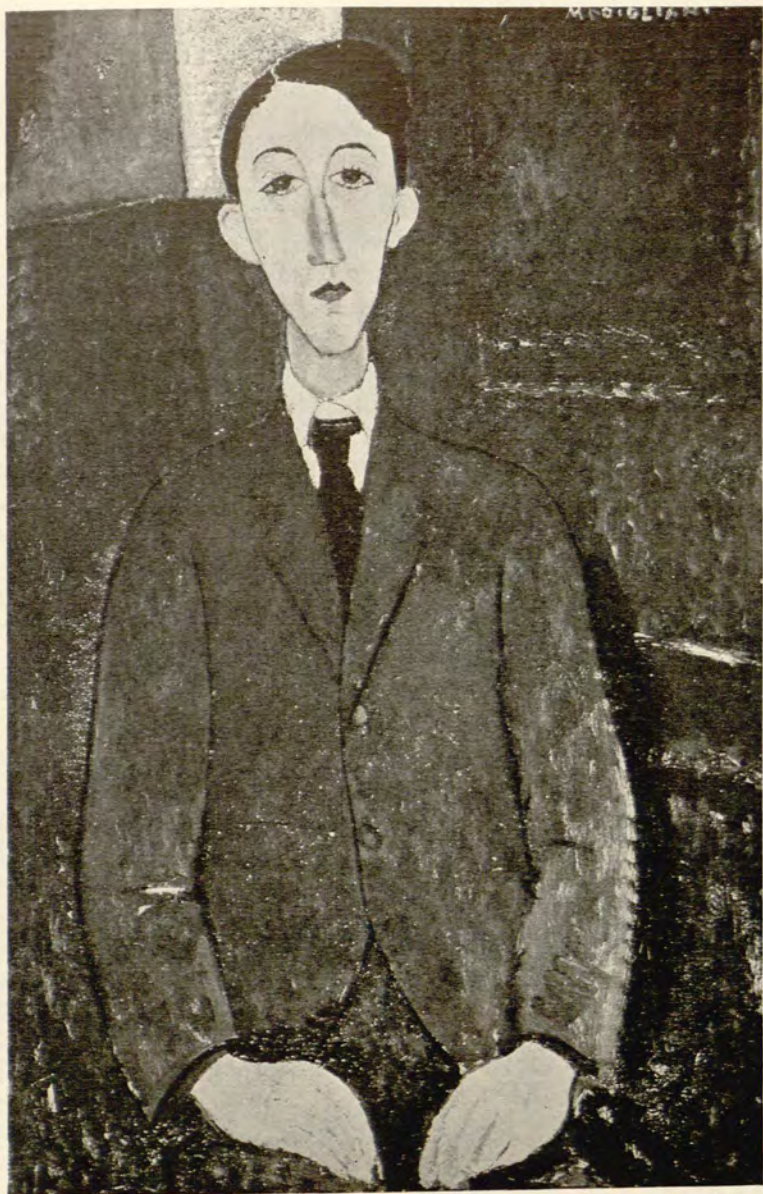




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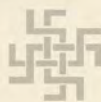
**"PORTRAIT," BY MARIE LAURENCIN**

No woman artist has ever been so delightfully feminine as Marie Laurencin. Her light-toned colour schemes in which only the eyes often strike a darker note, give to her girls an ethereal quality and charm which almost removes them above flesh and blood humanity.



*By courtesy of the Lefevre Gallery.*

"PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER, HUBERT," BY AMEDEO MODIGLIANI  
 Extreme simplification to emphasise the basic pattern and colour elements marks Modigliani's work.





he bought, to de Segonzac's amazement, for 3000 francs. Ten years later, at the Hotel Drouot sale, the same painting was sold for 90,000 francs.

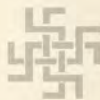
Maurice Utrillo is the son of the well-known artist, Suzanne Vallodon, who was a professional acrobat as a child. Her son was born when she was sixteen, and soon afterwards she became a model for Renoir and Puvis de Chavannes. When, later, she began to paint, she was encouraged by Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Cézanne. In such an atmosphere Utrillo's gifts were certain of attention. Ill-health has dogged him always, but his output has been considerable nevertheless. He paints largely from memory, in artificial light—and, some say, from post cards. He, too, is a realist, and he has evolved a peculiarly original style of painting to express the melancholy beauty of those long muddy grey-white streets of suburban Paris, with their tattered plane trees and decrepit green shutters. "Paysage de Bonlieue" is a good example of his work.

Raoul Dufy is the decorative artist *par excellence* of the period; sophisticated, ironic, and irreverent. As well as painting in oils he has specialised in very large water-colours, delightfully gay and frivolous in colour and mood, and amusingly calligraphic in design.

Marie Laurencin has also created a very charming form of decorative art, to which she strictly limits herself. Children and young girls (with a sly suggestion of malice in their enormous dark eyes), doves, flowers, and slender ponies with elegant arched necks provide her with subject-matter, which she renders on canvas in pale pinks and blues and white and grey, with sometimes a touch of black. Her charm and her art are essentially French, as will be realised from a glance at "Portrait."

Examples of the work of all these artists have been acquired by the principal galleries in Europe (including Moscow) and in the United States of America. Other French painters who have made international reputations in the period are Othon Friez, Lurçat, Marchand, Rouault, Léger, L'Hôte, Lotiron, Marquet, and Dufresne.

Posthumous fame came in the 'twenties to the Italian, Modigliani, whose art owes its strange distinction to the painter's admiration of negro sculpture. The reputations of the Polish painter, Kisling; the Spaniards, Picabia and Juan Gris; the Finnish artist, Survage; and the Russians, Chagal and Tchelichev, were all made in the "School of Paris" within the last two decades.



## XXXIX

### THE UNENDING STORY

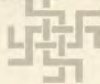
#### EUROPEAN ART TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

##### § I

ART does not "stop short in the cultivated court of the good Queen Anne," nor in that of Victoria. Inevitably it goes on as the experiences of humanity continue and demand expression. Two great wars and an interim period of social upheaval which interfered with the life habits of practically every person in Western civilisation; the wild forward surge of scientific discovery; the coming of the motor-car age and the approximate change over to urban living: such things have their repercussions on the artist and his patrons, and therefore upon art itself.

From such an age of turbulence we can hardly expect a quietist art. The academic painters, catering still for the remnants of aristocracy and the new plutocracy which imitates aristocracy, are still devoted to hunters and heiresses and the park-like landscapes wherein they disport themselves. They do their task magnificently; and the prime representative of this type of work, A. J. Munnings, has been elected to the Presidency of the Royal Academy and has been knighted in recognition of his work. Impressionism and Post-Impressionism have had an effect even on the most academic painters, however. Their colour has become brighter and more vibrant, their concern with light more pronounced. Sometimes there is a far echo of Cézanne in the most tidy English landscapes, or a decorative reminder that Gauguin passed across the field of art. Very much of the best English work might be thought of as Impressionism called to heel.

The vortex of art until the beginning of the second World War was Paris, and it was from Paris that the newer ideas came. London, New York, and the capitals of Europe swung round that vortex. With the rise first of Bolshevism in Russia, then of Fascism in Italy, and finally of Nazism in Germany a new element came into art in the form of State interference. The Russian government stigmatised almost all the existing art as bourgeois and decadent. Art for art's sake, the intellectualism of the newer schools, the academic old schools: all were recognized as under the patronage of the aristocracy and the capitalist and were condemned accordingly. Art

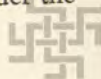




must be "Proletcult"; it must subserve the State, idealise the workers and their leaders, reflect the new age of the machine and the new order of society. At first it was greatly moved towards expression in abstract machine forms as Lenin's ideas of an electrical paradise caught the imagination of the Russians. Later it swung back to something akin to late-Victorian romanticism and story pictures; revolutionary leaders addressing meetings, workers going to the fields or in the factories, taking the place of the domestic sentiment in our own story-telling pictures. Gaponenko painting "Farm Workers going to Work," or Kuznetsov turning his Post-Impressionist art to subjects in the Eastern provinces under the new industrialism, or Alexander Deineka showing the town people of the Soviet: these are the type of artist and subject of the newer Realism and Impressionism now emerging from the early censorship.

Fascism in Italy had an entirely different approach. Marinetti, the Futurist (that much-abused word used loosely as a synonym for all modernist art methods), had a great deal of influence. He glorified war and violence and advocated an art which would express these dynamics. Nothing much came of it; and ultimately it quietly passed away when the State department of the Syndicate of Fine Art organized all the artists under a scheme of official patronage. This official art, with its ultimate reward of salaried membership of the Fascist Royal Academy, led to naturalism and realism which was of little importance, a slight harking back to the traditional painting of Italy in her great days in the hands of such men as Funi, or of Umbrian landscape in those of the Siennese, Dario Neri.

In Germany all modernism in art was suppressed as decadent, Bolshevik, Jewish, or any other word with which unofficial ideas could be belaboured. Hitler's own taste for tepid late eighteenth-century German art naturally established the fashion. An exhibition of the proscribed "Decadent Art" organized by the Nazis in Munich as a kind of Chamber of Horrors to shock good Nazis was enormously patronized (and, one suspects, enjoyed) but not necessarily in a manner which would have been approved by the authorities. Another exhibition of the work of artists accepted by the Government failed to evoke any popular excitement, although the work exhibited was often soundly academic as well as politically innocuous. Let it be granted that art in Germany after the 1914-18 war, reflecting the neurosis of that most febrile and unhappy country, had rushed down a steep place after every form of the bizarre. But official interference with German artists and the general sense of the loss of personal freedom resulted in the artists coming out and leaving the Germans in, if we may paraphrase Whistler's *mot*. As with Russian official art, the insistence on the importance of the subject swung things back to literalism and story-telling realism. Elk Eber picturing Storm Troopers passing grim factory workers under the



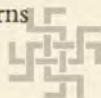
sacred sign of the Swastika, or Adolf Wissel's Nain-like peasants posing for their portraits, may be good statecraft and are not entirely negligible as painting, but it is not on such painting that great art is founded.

## § 2

From all this totalitarianism either of left or right the freedom-loving artist flees. Perhaps it was the artist's passion for freedom which caused him to gravitate to pre-war Paris, for there to the artist even the economic bondage of comparative poverty mattered little if at all. The life of the studios and of the cafés was one of the freest in the world. Nearly forty thousand students made up that world. The masters of all countries and the men and women who took art with deadly seriousness came there. As rigid authoritarianism clamped down on various states the free artists fled to the French capital where liberty, equality and fraternity still were words with meaning. The Isms followed one another with bewildering rapidity: Cubism, Futurism, Simultanism, Dadaism, Surrealism, the names were legion. It was all a little mad and neurotic, but the world in which it was born was mad and neurotic. Art has to be a little mad anyway.

The French Fauvists, the "wild beasts" of 1905, were settling down into accepted masters. If the wildness of Derain had swung over to a distinctively French style influenced by Cézanne among the moderns and by the French primitives; if Matisse, one-time leader of the Fauves, had grown comparatively tame in a style of delightful decoration; if Edouard Vuillard had become something of an old master with his intimate studies of French interiors and of French scenery; and Vlaminck, who had once stirred the art world with his passion for Negro Sculpture and had once been a leading Cubist, had now swung to the other extreme with loosely drawn and dramatically coloured landscapes wherein the paint overlay the basic form; if Marie Laurencin was repeating her feminine dainties *ad infinitum* (and perhaps, alas, *ad nauseum*); there was still excitement. Braque, the Cubist, was true to his self-created formula of map-like decorations based on still life and abstract form. Georges Rouault remained an Expressionist, telling his vision of tortured humanity with the utmost emotionalism, with the thick outlines and rather chalky colour which he had made his own. Utrillo still evoked magic from the most unpromising dull streets of provincial and suburban France and from the drab bricks and mortar of Montmartre; and Dunoyer de Segonzac carried on magnificently the pure Impressionist tradition.

Moreover there was the Spaniard Picasso who had long been the accepted leader of movements in Parisian circles. He had been everything in turns





but nothing long. The restless mind which had once stood for Cubism tried a score of methods old and new, sane and mad. He is the overwhelming influence towards change. The younger men accept him as their leader though they do not dare to imitate his highly individual vision. Most important of his more recent work was the great cartoon "Guernica," his impassioned protest against the martyrdom of the little Basque town, the dress-rehearsal of modern war methods with which we have now become all too familiar. There is a story that when the German invaders, examining his Paris studio, saw the work, one of them asked Picasso, "Did you do that?" and the intrepid Spaniard replied: "No, you did." If the story is not true, it should be. The cartoon, appalling in its ugliness, "purges with pity and terror," as Aristotle demanded of the art of tragedy. Clawing hands and gaping mouths and trampling beasts amid the shells of buildings, "Guernica" is a vision of hell. It is terribly ugly, utterly distorted, unreal, yet with its own overpowering realism. Almost everything Picasso does to-day is a challenge, although in such a painting as "The Virgin of Toledo" he can express himself with a winning and tenuous charm.

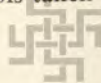
The exhibition in London of work which Picasso had done during the German occupation of Paris proved to be an art bombshell, causing furious controversy. It was a mixture of the earlier Cubist style and of the highly individual method of depicting the ugly which he had used in the "Guernica." Its apologists explained that it presented his reactions to the hatefulness of the situation in an occupied country. True it was powerful, but its morbidity evoked much criticism.

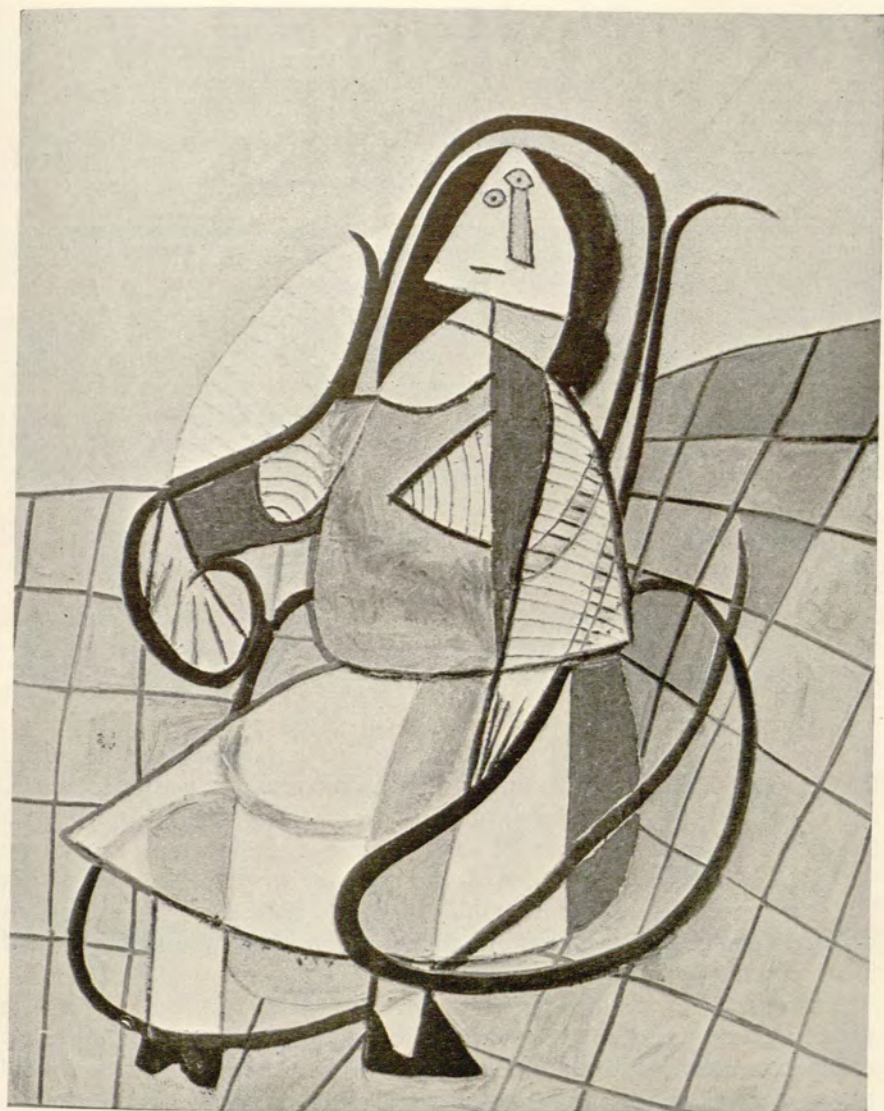
Two other Spaniards were with Picasso in Paris. One was Salvator Dali, who has since gone to New York; the other Joan Miro. Both were linked with the Surrealist movement.

Surrealism, or as some prefer to call it, Super-realism, has been the only new movement of any importance during the last twenty years. Herbert Read writes of the aims, methods, and meaning of the surrealists as follows:

As the word implies, the main doctrine of the school is that there exists a world more real than the normal world and this is the world of the unconscious mind. . . . I doubt if *surréalisme* would ever have existed in its present form but for Professor Freud . . . for just as Freud finds a key to the perplexities of life in the material of dreams, so the *surréaliste* finds his best inspiration in the same region. It is not that he merely makes a pictorial representation of dream-images; his aim is rather to employ any means which will give him access to the repressed contents of the unconscious, and then to mingle these elements freely with the conscious images. . . .

Here then is the clue to the meaning of the fantastic, incoherent, and often repellent pictures which have been seen in some London galleries during the last few years. They are pictorial expressions, in symbols taken





"LADY IN A ROCKING CHAIR," BY PABLO PICASSO

An example of Picasso's later method. The forms have been so broken and rearranged as non-realistic patterns to express the essence of the subject as the artist conceives it that there is little nature or representation left.



from the dream-world, of whatever the artist could uncover of his "unconscious"; and because there is usually some strange beauty and emotion in dreams, many of these paintings have æsthetic value, and some can communicate a disturbing emotion.

Max Ernst, who was exiled from the Third Reich in the Nazi purge of "decadent art," possesses, according to M. Breton, the French poet who launched the movement in 1924 with a manifesto, "the most magnificently haunted brain of to-day"—a very useful possession, one surmises, for a *surréaliste*! And certainly, his "Couple Zoomorphique en Gestation," a typical example of his art, gives the impression of a very bad dream indeed!

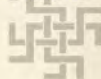
Dali, however, is a strictly conscientious draughtsman of naturalistic appearances. If the association of ideas evokes the image of a lobster when he sees a bald head, and the consequent picture is, in essence, a lobster poised on a bald head, both are very carefully drawn and painted. His famous "Suburbs of the Paranoic-Critical Town" is full of classically depicted things in the weirdest juxtaposition: a temple, an arm-chair, a horse's skull a girl with a bunch of grapes. Miro is a much closer disciple of Picasso; a Cubist as well as a Surrealist, who makes no attempt to represent realistically "the stuff that dreams are made of."

One other Surrealist who finally gravitated to Paris is the Italian, Giorgio di Chirico. He was born in Greece of Italian parents, which probably accounts for the pronounced vein of classicism in his painting. It is cold, hard, remote, and unemotional; yet it is grand and beautiful. His horses (which are so often the motif of his pictures) are perfect creatures, full of life and movement, but somehow they belong to dreams. Broken fragments of classical temples lie about; strange, cotton-wool clouds are static in the cold blue of the skies. It is a visionary world of the imagination but it is excellently rendered. Chirico goes to nature for his models, as the dreaming mind does, but his juxtapositions have a strangeness and incongruity only just short of those of Dali.

Surrealism has another exponent in the Belgian, Delvaux. He also paints a classic, timeless and utterly irrational world wherein women can change into trees below the waist. Again his environment is often that of ruined classical architecture stated in coldly objective terms.

### § 3

Two other extremists belonging to the International Brigade of Art are Paul Klee, the German-trained Swiss, and Kandinsky the Russian. Both have become complete abstractionists, pursuing expression to a point of anarchy which makes it almost valueless as communication. That is

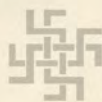




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**"HORSES BY THE SEA," BY GIORGIO DE CHIRICO**

Chirico has made in his art a world of fantasy where nobly stylised horses move against a background of ruined classic temples. It is a dream-world, but the artist does not abandon the truth to visual appearances of waking reality, however strongly he insists on the design values of his paintings.



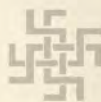


one of the dangers of all this subjective art, for there should be acceptable symbols if art is to fulfil its function of speaking from mind to mind. Klee and Kandinsky both create rather thin and entirely non-representational works. Klee's contribution is a kind of automatic writing. He worked at the celebrated Bauhaus of Weimar with Gropius and Kandinsky, and was a professor of Dusseldorf Academy until he had to leave Nazi Germany. An extract from Klee's own exposition of his method may be illuminating. (The process described has been called "Going for a walk with a line.") "From a dead full-stop the first act of movement sets off (line). After a short time a halt to take breath (interrupted line, or line jointed by repeated halts). A look back, what a long way we have already gone (opposite movement). Then taking thought of the way hither and thither (bundle of lines) . . ." and so on. The result makes cheerful patterns, sometimes reminding one of the untutored drawings of children and peasants. Such is the amusing and disarming "The Trout in the Forest." It may be significant as the reaction against over-sophistication and against the smooth naturalistic finish of late nineteenth-century art.

The exhibition of Klee's work at the Tate Gallery early in 1946 revealed a lyric personality which had expressed itself by many methods. The technical charm of his harmonious colouring and delicate draughtsmanship amply compensated for the loss of the merely representational element which throughout his career he has so firmly avoided. Sometimes, however, the result looks remarkably like childish nonsense.

Kandinsky was born in Moscow, but went to Germany and with Klee and Marc formed a group called *Der Blaue Reiter*. He moved more and more towards abstraction and was one of the Dadaist Group, who in the hectic 'twenties consciously exalted utter nonsense and irrationalism as the right thing in art. He became almost morbidly anxious to avoid natural appearances, trying "to eliminate from his painting any memory of visible objects in nature"—an almost impossible task, be it said, for the visual memory of the spectator tends to see resemblances to natural objects in the most meaningless scribble.

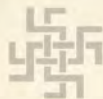
This work of Klee and Kandinsky was the approximate extreme to which the search for new methods of expression and the rejection of old carried modern art. It was suspiciously like emptying out the baby with the bath, and it opened the door to the charlatanism which lacked the draughtsmanship to depict the baby anyway. On the other hand we have to remember that dull academic art, even though it demands a certain power of handicraft and is subject to visual cross reference with the things of Nature which it is depicting in pigment, can be so uninspired that it has no value beyond the merest surface appeal or the sentimental literalism which accompanied that.





"LADY WITH NECKLACE," BY PAUL KLEE

Klee has made a study of masks in Ethnographic museums, and has experimented with their power to startle the imagination. Some of his pictures remind us of the scrawls of children, some of primitive savage art, some of things seen in a mental hospital ; but even Klee's most nightmarish products usually show a feeling for craftsmanship in the quality of their paint, and often a calligraphic quality of line. His abstract designs are pure inventions rather than abstractions of things seen.



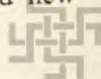


The German Expressionists who flourished in the years after the 1914-18 war and before the rise of the Nazis were much less abstract. They sought to express in colour and line the emotional life of their unhappy land. The colour was vivid and crude often, the line tortured and undraughtsmanlike; but they got something compelling. It was neurotic, so was the world it expressed. It was ugly, so was the life it depicted. Beckmann and Baumeister and Nolde were its exponents among many others, and that vicious cartoonist, Georg Grosz, who depicted so terribly the night life of decadent Berlin. The brilliant woman artist, Kathe Kollwitz, contributed her telling pictures of the starving mothers and children of Germany under the blockade. Most outstanding of the Expressionists, perhaps because he so developed a style of his own which surpassed Expressionism, was Franz Marc. He took animal forms and made of them the most thrilling rhythmic designs; and although he used colour subjectively and contorted form to suit his own purposes, his paintings became accepted classics and were world famous. He was killed in the last war when he was only thirty-five, and despite the Nazi dislike of non-representational art he has been accepted by them as a great German painter. The Austrian, Egger-Lienz, was another man who won universal approval. He may be said to have anticipated Expressionism with his terrible studies of peasant life long before the 1914-18 war. Although he was too big a man to be neatly labelled, his "Dance of Death," painted in 1925, a year before his death, was a piece of pure Expressionism and a terrible comment on war.

Another interesting German modernist, albeit now his work belongs to the Cubist and Futurist past, is Lyonel Feininger. He was born as far back as 1871 and was actually American by birth, but he lived and painted much in Germany, where he created interesting cubistic studies of buildings, the interpenetrating planes and sharp angles reorganized to make fascinating designs of form and light.

#### § 4

The smaller countries of Europe have, as one would suppose, each produced artists working in these newer styles. Usually their works have not been so extreme. France intellectually and Germany emotionally led art down these strange by-paths. The quieter and more balanced Scandinavian peoples were not given to such excesses; nor were the Dutch; and even the Czechs, who might have been expected to be caught up in the Central European storm, kept their feet on the ground. In Czechoslovakia, or rather in old Bohemia, Josef Manes led the way for new art ideas in the middle of last century, and towards the end of that century a society was founded in his name to encourage Impressionism and new



ideas. Josef Capek, part author of the *Insect Play*, and an altogether delightful artist; Kubista; Slavicek, the Impressionist; and Kubin, who has since migrated to France and changed his name to Coubine, are outstanding Czech painters; with such younger men as Jan Zrzavy who simplifies his forms and eliminates all non-essentials.

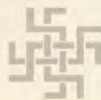
Holland's most outstanding personality is Toroop, although Jan Sluyters is a more popular artist with a reputation beyond the Netherlands; whilst Willink, the one-time Surrealist, and Hynckes, the Cubist, probably have their appeal rather to the younger generation. The sculptor, Hildo Krop, should be also mentioned, for he has created some monumental work in the new spirit including the great public clock at Rotterdam with its massively sculptured heads emerging from the stone. Another Dutch artist whose work is more familiar to Londoners is Jan Poortenaar, for he worked in England for some years and has exhibited his etchings and his studies of the Dutch East Indies here since he returned to Holland.

Charley Toroop, the daughter of Jan, showed work of conspicuous power in an exhibition in London of work done in Holland during the German occupation, and in this same exhibition the Expressionist work of Hendrik Chabot was remarkable.

One other Exhibition held since the war in London has brought to us almost our first acquaintance with the Belgian, James Ensor, whose work has long been known on the Continent. Ensor, whose technique has in it something of the gaiety and colour of Renoir, but who is too individual to claim for any school or master, delights in strangely macabre subjects. He makes queer genre pictures of skeletons and disembodied masks.

The Scandinavian countries have, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, produced a number of first-rate sculptors, and also certain painters with pronounced individuality, although the inspiration in painting more than in sculpture is cosmopolitan and derives from Paris. Edvard Munck, the Norwegian, was by far the greatest and most outstanding figure. He was a daring Impressionist with a courage in the abstraction and synthesis of form which carried him far beyond any mere visualisation of the scene or figure. He achieved the standing of a master in these Northern countries and his brilliant colour-schemes influenced the painting of his day. Munck has recently died. Alongside him as an influence is Anders Zorn, the brilliant Swedish etcher, who also carried the Impressionist technique into this graphic realm. Denmark made her contribution with Johannes Larsen, a noble painter of animals and of the quiet Danish landscape.

Against this background of the earlier men, all influenced by the French Impressionists, must be set the newer school who found their inspiration in the Post-Impressionists and in some of the Fauvists, Matisse being a particular influence. Einar Jolin, Leander Engstrom, Hilding Linqvist, and



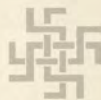




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"SKELETONS WARMING THEMSELVES," BY JAMES ENSOR

An exhibition in London during early 1946 of the work of the Belgian artist, Ensor, enabled us to appreciate the power of his fantastic mind and his ability to express it in paint. He owes little to anybody, though one sometimes seems to detect echoes of Renoir's palette and brushwork. His subjects often take the form of bodiless masks or clothed skeletons, and have an element of social satire.

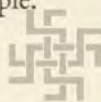


Johan Johansson. Linqvist in particular, with his deliberate simplification of scene and figure, is regarded in his own country, where the folk quality in his work naturally has an immediate appeal.

One other of the smaller nations needs to be considered. Poland has long had a tradition of art, and has of recent years contributed magnificently to the graphic arts, bringing to them her riches of tradition and folklore. Perhaps it is hardly fair to claim Suzanne Eisendieck for Poland, for she was born in Danzig and studied first in Berlin and then in Paris. She has a curious feminine charm, something of a Northern version of Marie Laurencin, although her work is entirely different and is, indeed, highly individual. The theatre, the music-hall, the circus, the café, these are her hunting-grounds for subjects, and her period is that quaint one which in England we call Edwardian. The dressed-up feminine types particularly appeal to her, and she renders them in gay, high-toned paint.

Moise Kisling is another Pole who went to Paris and stayed there, giving us well-built work in a classically simplified draughtsmanship. But for more typically Polish work we must look to the woman painter Zofia Stryjenska, who still depicts the peasant, fairy-tale Poland of our dreams, with delightful brilliantly coloured costumes, painted wooden architecture, and the fir trees of the North. The Pole who has sprung into well-deserved fame of recent years, however, is the brilliant cartoonist Topolski. His has brought to perfection as a means of expression a nervously alive line which brings a kind of Impression into linear art. His sepia drawings shimmer on the paper, and when he has the opportunity to transfer them to walls he keeps this vital quality. The war, and his national fury with his country's enemies, has brought out the bitter satirical power of his mind and given new motives for his brilliant work. Topolski has settled in London.

The emergence of Diego Rivera as a major artist is one of the most interesting events of the period. Diego Rivera was born in 1886 and brought up in Mexico City. In 1907, with the help of the Governor of Vera Cruz, he came to Europe to study art, and after extensive travel in Spain and Italy he settled in Paris and joined Picasso's circle. His paintings of this period show his preoccupation with Cubism, but the Byzantine mosaics seen in Italy had profoundly impressed him and their influence can be traced in the great series of frescoes he did years later in Mexico City, in Detroit at the Ford Works, in New York, and elsewhere. Especially is this evident in the powerful use made of simplification to give dignity and impressiveness to the figures in his famous Mexican murals. Rivera's chance came after his return home in 1921, when Vascencelos, Minister of Education under Obregon, engaged him with other native artists to decorate the three-tiered patio of the new education offices. This was his first great work, and others were to follow. The scheme of the frescoes is simple.



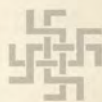




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**"SOLSTICE OF THE SUNFLOWER," BY PAUL NASH**

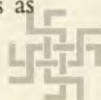
Nash painted a series of four great canvases on the theme of the Sunflower and the Sun. In three of them the sunflower stands in the sky in place of the sun, but in this the sun shines from its zenith moving the firewheel of the flower on its mystical way through the standing corn. This symbolises the blessing of the midsummer fire, the link between the heavenly body and the fulness of Nature.



On the ground-floor walls the labouring life of the common people provides the theme ; the life of the mind is illustrated on the second-floor galleries by school and laboratory scenes ; the top-floor walls reflect the life of the spirit, by which the artist understands primarily the self-sacrifice and ardour of Mexican revolutionaries, symbolical, full-length portraits of many of whom are included in the paintings. At Chapingo in the agricultural school, Rivera has done one of his most famous frescoes : "The Distribution of Land to the Peasants," and here, too, he has used well-known Mexican personalities as models. His output has been enormous and his work is one of the chief influences in contemporary American art. Of late the artist has turned to landscape and portraiture.

## § 5

And what of England ? Among moderns three men in particular have emerged during immediately recent years : John Piper, Henry Moore, and Graham Sutherland. As we have seen in Chapter XXXVII, there were and are a host of men and women doing good work based on the English tradition of sound craftsmanship modified by the influence of Impressionism. Speaking generally, Britain does not encourage wildness. On the other hand we must not assume that the English lack courage in art, for it has to be remembered that we produced Constable and Turner, both of whom were pronounced influences in founding the French Impressionists and thereby upon the whole development of modern art. Our galleries and critics have, moreover, given welcome to the new ideas, and our connoisseurs have become their patrons. Sir Kenneth Clark as the Director of the National Gallery pursued a policy of patronage and propaganda which if it erred in its catholicity erred on the side of the moderns. During the war years also C.E.M.A., the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, organized many exhibitions, and again the policy has been to give encouragement to new men and ideas. A grant from the Pilgrim Trust to commission artists to record England threatened by German bombs has also been interpreted as a means to patronize specific artists approximately of the progressive wing, although for that particular purpose many of us feel that a more catholic selection of art work and a choice nearer representation would have been a sounder policy, the idea being to record Britain and not to record contemporary art or the individualised work of a comparatively few selected artists. Of the older masters, Sickert and Steer have won forward to increasing fame and popularity, fine exhibitions of their work at the National Gallery having revealed more than ever their high standing. The official patronage of many painters as





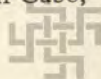
war artists (often on the home front which was itself so much a war front) has kept art vividly alive and concerned with vital subjects. One interesting phenomenon of war-time painting has been the depicting of London under the Blitz, a subject which has caught the imaginations and the brushes of a number of artists actually engaged in the Fire Service. Exhibitions of these paintings took place at Burlington House, and although the tremendous subject tended to overpower the purely aesthetic appeal, much of the work had more than documentary value.

The regular Exhibitions of the work of official war artists, on the whole, yielded nothing startling beyond this same documentary value. The men with established reputations have discovered new and often thrilling subjects. Eric Kennington, long established for his virile masculine portraits, found magnificent material in the men of the Air Force. Muirhead Bone brought his genius to bear on places, and Dame Laura Knight turned hers out of the circus and the caravan to record the munition factory. An interestingly individual contribution was made by the late Eric Ravillious who based his war drawings on a kind of impressionistic pen line and wash which brilliantly expressed the effects of light or other dynamics of Nature.

In England the Surrealist movement has been taken up with enthusiasm by many of the youngest generation of painters, and among the older artists of repute Paul Nash, John Armstrong, Roland Penrose, and Edward Burra. Paul Nash, whose death was a great loss to English art, had long abandoned his very beautiful and original form of stylised realism, which gave us a lovely pale-tinted series of interiors and landscapes. At one time, like his younger brother John Nash, he used simplification brilliantly in his efforts to impose design on nature, but his work became progressively more abstract as he experimented.

John Armstrong began by making decorations for a cabaret, which earned him the title of "the modern Beardsley" from one critic, and later he designed amusing stage settings, in a pseudo-naïve, Early Victorian idiom, a little reminiscent in their bright crude colouring of the old "penny plain, twopence coloured" theatrical prints. Now he has joined the newest movement, which gives considerable scope for his talent for precise decoration in clean flat colour. A panel by him is in the Tate Gallery.

A development of abstract art is the Constructivist School of which Piet Mondrian, Naum Gabo, and Ben Nicholson in painting, and Barbara Hepworth in sculpture are the principal exponents of distinction. The Dutch painter, Mondrian, is the real leader of the group. In many of his paintings straight lines are drawn heavily and evenly across the whole surface of the work so as to make rigid rectangular patterns. Naum Gabo,

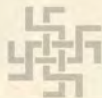




"SHELTERERS IN THE TUBE," BY HENRY MOORE

From the painting in the Imperial War Museum

Henry Moore is primarily known for his highly stylised or abstract sculpture and the drawings he makes for it. During the second World War, however, he did a series of powerful and expressively pathetic studies of the people sheltering from air-raids in the Tubes. This study compares interestingly with the picture by Walter Bayes, made in 1918 and reproduced on page 700.



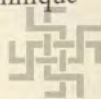


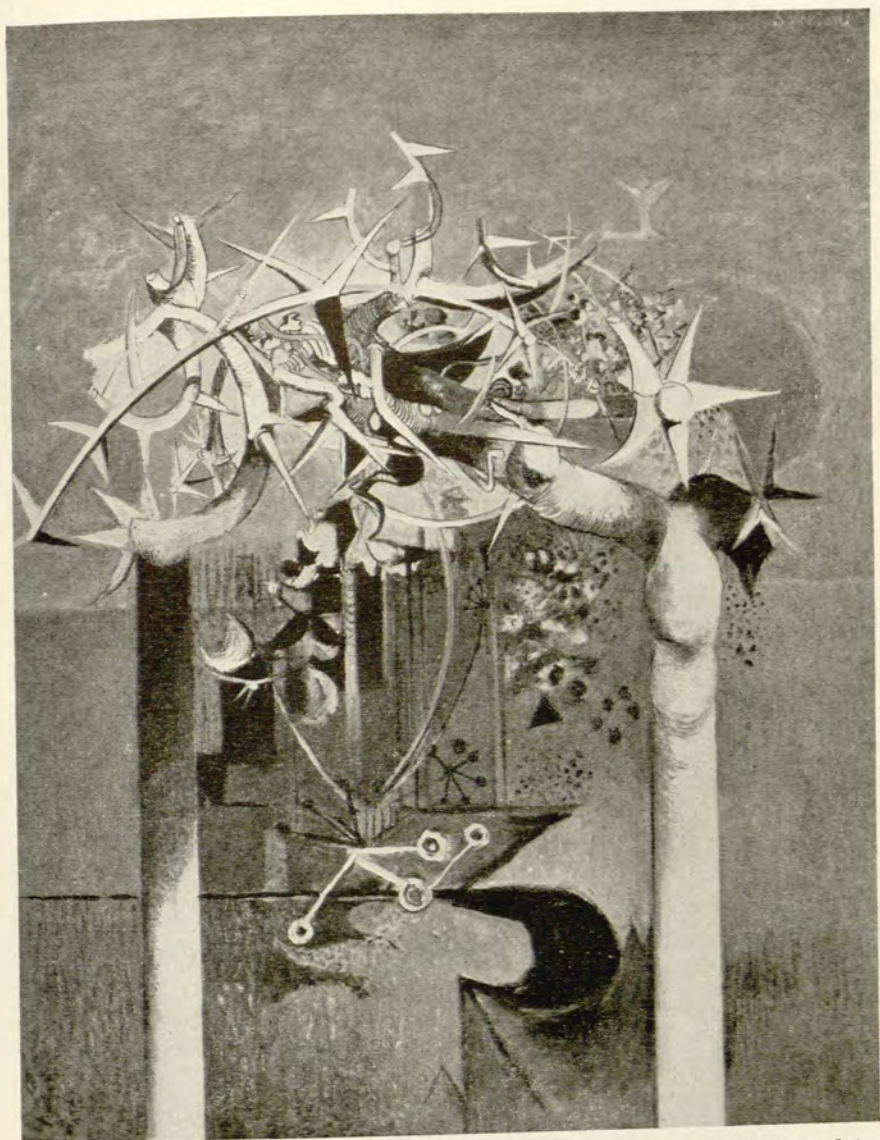
who was born in Central Russia in 1890 and who worked in Germany during the 'twenties, holds that what he calls the "unseen subjects," the reality that lies deeper than surface appearances, are the real matter of the art of the future, of which Constructivism is a foretaste. In a broadcast discussion he stated that the Constructivist's aim is to invent a new harmony and a new scale of emotion, and that to do this there is no need to borrow subjects from the external world.

Ben Nicholson arrived at Constructivism after many experiments. Ten years and more ago he was producing attractive landscapes in charming colour, drawn somewhat in the downright way in which a child draws, with blobs of trees sticking up and great emphasis on contours; and at the same time he was making amusing still lifes, again in high, sweet colour and often on big empty canvases, with a mug or a cup and a plate or two isolated in the centre. Then he "arranged" or "composed" and mainly in chalk white, rectangles and circles in low relief. No one can deny the decorativeness of these austere compositions.

Graham Sutherland's art is peculiarly un-English. It depends chiefly upon the challenge of its colour, which is particularly violent. He sacrifices form and all else to this, although he was attracted by the shapes of giant girders twisted by heat and wrecked by explosives during the bombing of London. With such a subject his anarchic style is more at home than when he presents Nature, for the sense of beauty in Nature is bound up with a certain delight and intimacy, and the crude greens and violent oranges of Sutherland's work miss altogether that aspect. His style and colour are explosive and belong to a world of violence so that he found his rightful place as a war artist.

Henry Moore is primarily a sculptor but during the second World War was preoccupied with the forms of people sheltering in the Underground stations, usually expressed in pen and wash. These were curious rhythmic dehumanised studies, terrible in their intensity and pathos. They were the modern English equivalent of Expressionism, and yet they had a classical coldness. In no sense representational, these drab studies of dehumanised humanity were an indictment of the misery of war as telling as Goya's of two centuries ago. Moore's sculpture is an attempt to get sculpture out of pure, abstract form. Arguing that sculpture is primarily an affair of masses and holes, as Rodin asserted, this modernist became preoccupied with the effects obtained by the wearing of rocks and pebbles by water, and has built up a number of works on this sort of rhythm and relationship of masses. In their own way they are interesting but are remote from human interest, except that of a very few profound intellectuals. It is again a matter that art must have accepted symbols if it is to fulfil its function of communication between mind and mind. Moore adapts this same technique

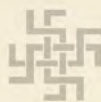




*By permission of the Lefevre Gallery.*

**"THE THORN TREE," BY GRAHAM SUTHERLAND**

Graham Sutherland's pictures are ideas not representations. Here is the essential thorniness of the thorn tree, its basic character translated into curious semi-abstract shapes.



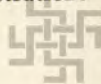


to approximations of the human female figure, seeing that too as an arrangement of rounded masses and the sort of holes which are worn in rocks by the action of water and the grinding of pebbles. In these works the difficulty of acceptance is added to by the half-resemblance to the human form and the feeling of utter distortion which comes from this. His work has, however, found a number of powerful advocates, is frequently exhibited, and is much discussed. Time alone will show whether this excitement is a passing fashion for the bizarre or an early recognition of a new form of art and expression.

John Piper, the third man whose work has recently emerged into the limelight, is a painter of landscapes and architecture which wins through by dramatic colouring and chiaroscuro. The somewhat dull façades of churches or barns become startling things of brilliant orange set against smoky blue-greys. A series of studies of Windsor Castle, bought by the Queen, showed the historic pile like some strange theatre scene. Indeed, this element of theatricality is paramount in Piper's work. There is sound draughtsmanship underneath his surfaces, and a vivid imagination. Even at its most bizarre, it is beautiful and exciting as art should be.

One other English artist of outstanding personality is Edward Burra. He is one of the most exotic painters of our time, a depicter of rococo horror, in a style so tense in design and brilliant in colour that his work cannot be missed. He goes for his subjects to the underworld, the torture chamber, the night club, and to that decadence of religion which we find in the churches of Mexico and Spain. In one mood he follows Georg Gross, the German satirist, of the night haunts of Berlin, but his more personal style is one of thick, rich water-colour of startling solidity.

For the rest, art in England pursues much the path it had taken in the days after the last war. Paul Nash became more than ever a Surrealist seeking his subjects in the recesses of his own mind and creating landscapes of macabre significance in the cold greys and pale blues and browns he had always loved. Wadsworth continues to bring together strange objects of the seashore in a kind of weird assembly which has only its nautical associations as a link. John Armstrong is a classical Surrealist who brings excellent draughtsmanship to portray the strangely assorted objects of his dreams. And a host of less outstanding or less challenging people produce good work nearer the academic tradition. One phenomenon worth recording is the revival in the graphic arts. Wood-cutting and engraving have found a number of first-rate exponents and the art of book production—always at its best in England—has benefited. The work of Robert Gibbings, of Clare Leighton, Agnes Miller Parker, John Farleigh and Eric Underwood stands out from the many who are creating noble illustrations and decorations for books.

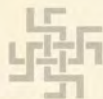




*Copyright.*

"COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOUSE OF COMMONS," BY JOHN PIPER

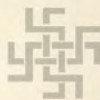
John Piper has used his characteristic style of dramatically illuminated architecture to show the ruined chamber of the House of Commons after the Blitz.





## § 6

So it moves still : this practice of art which nearly twenty thousand years ago began in the caves or on the bones of animals. In this machine age the cinema, the demands of advertisement in poster and magazine, the need for design in a thousand directions has almost superseded the creation of the mural and the easel picture. In this democratic age the art of the mural is having a resurgence on the walls of community centres, restaurants, and great public buildings such as the magnificent Town Hall at Stockholm. Stores and public restaurants employ the artists who once were patronised by the lords spiritual and temporal. Cinemas are decorated instead of churches and palaces. Books costing a few pence each are illustrated instead of the Missals and Books of Hours of the Middle Ages. Posters are purchased for the hoardings where once the merchant princes bought precious landscapes or interiors to adorn their walls. But art goes on in the new ways. It explores new aspects of man's mind, new activities of his body. And always it continues to evoke the magic which for twenty thousand years has been conjured by that strangest of all human creatures, the artist.



## XL

### ART IN THE COMMONWEALTH

THE PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS OF CANADA, AUSTRALIA,  
SOUTH AFRICA, AND NEW ZEALAND

#### § 1

THERE may have been a tendency in Britain to think of the great overseas dominions and colonies as fields of giant physical rather than cultural exercise, but recent years have tended to correct the extremes of this view. We became intensely aware, for instance, at the Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924-25 of the claim of the contemporary Canadian artists at least to very considerable attention, realising that out of the characteristic grandeur and beauty of their country one group of painters especially had established a style of their own almost independent of European artists. Since then our awareness has broadened. Not the least aspect of it has been the acceptance of the arts of the primitive and the native peoples of the smaller colonies and dependencies chiefly in highly stylised sculpture, folk and ritual in origin but nevertheless possessing fascinating formal qualities. As we have noted in a previous chapter there has been an absolute vogue for this type of work, some of it, such as the Benin sculpture and the Ifi heads from West Africa, having a beauty and classical perfection not in the least exotic or bizarre. We have, however, long realised the sense of rhythm of almost all African peoples and Polynesians, and, if anything, the cult of this art among ultra-sophisticated European aesthetes has been overdone. It is, therefore, with the painting and sculpture of the white settlers rather than with that of the native peoples that we are dealing here.

#### § 2

Canadian art history does not really commence until the nineteenth century when Paul Kane (1810-71) came with his family from Ireland and settled in what was then York, and is now Toronto. This was about 1819. Kane from the beginning was attracted by the colourful Indian encampments and the magnificent Canadian Indian types. In the early 'forties he visited Europe, and when he returned to Canada he arranged



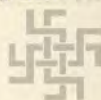


with the Hudson Bay Company to make an expedition with their fur traders into the wilderness of the West and North-West. His book, *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, became something of a classic and a definite contribution towards anthropology. On this journey, which was pursued right across the Rockies to the Pacific coast, Kane made some of his studies of the Indians and their encampments, and it was this work which he continued.

The next name is that of Cornelius Krieghoff (1815-72), a German-born artist who first studied in Holland and then settled in Canada after joining the American army, deserting, and marrying a French Canadian girl. Somewhat in the manner of the earlier Dutch artists, Krieghoff depicted the life of the early settlers, especially at a famous tavern, *Chez Jolifou*, which he himself frequented. He also worked for the coloured engravings which were growing in popularity in his time, and in these he records vividly the scenery of the country and the picturesque Indians.

These two were the pioneer painters. After them Canada seems for a long time to have been concerned chiefly with its material development, and it is not until towards the end of the century that we again find anything of outstanding merit. By then, of course, the artists are no longer European born. Four men born in the 1850's were destined to play a large part in creating a definite Canadian art: Homer B. Watson (1855-1930), Horatio Walker (1858-1938), Franklin Brownell (1856- ), and William Brymner (1855-1925). Watson and Walker both saw the possibilities of rendering the beauty of the Canadian countryside they knew, the farms, and farm life. "To make pictures of attractive moods of Nature," Watson declared his aim, and though often the moods are fierce rather than softly attractive, his robust style was equal to the task. Both men working well into the twentieth century painted in the thick impasto which seemed so right for conveying the bold effects of this sturdy land.

Maurice Cullen (1877-1934) and James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924), the next two Canadian artists, owe their style much more to the French of the late nineteenth century. Cullen was an enthusiastic Impressionist when he returned to Montreal from Paris, and found in the snow scenes and the ice glow of his native land fascinating effects of light. He was an open-air painter and catches marvellously the effect of the air filled with snow. Morrice is probably the most important of all Canadian artists, his reputation extending well beyond the boundaries of the Dominion and his pictures being in a number of public galleries abroad. He divided his time between France and Canada, returning there in the winters to get the effects of the scenery under snow. A friend of Harpignies, of Matisse, and of Condor, Morrice had the international feeling for art, and in his own work a lovely sense of colour, suffusing his cold skies with a delicate





*Provincial Museum, Quebec.*

"LAURENTIAN VILLAGE," BY CLARENCE A. GAGNON

A typically Canadian painter, and one of the founders of the style of bold forms and colouring which we associate with the art of Canada, Gagnon found his subjects in the snowbound villages nestling in the fold of the hills. He made a motive of the solid little sleighs and the brilliant touches of colour of the clothes of their drivers.





rose-pink. He exploited, too, the solid shapes of the typical sleighs of the farmers, their squat, low-bodied forms set on the ruts in the snow-covered roads. It was all absolutely Canadian, with the whole knowledge of European painting behind it. His pictures of the various places in Europe, Africa, and the West Indies, which he visited, fine as they are, never quite achieve the place personality of the Canadian works.

Linked in spirit with Morrice was Clarence Gagnon (1880-1942). Trained first in Canada under Brymner, who was himself an enthusiastic admirer of Whistler and a great influence on the young men of Montreal as the Head of the Montreal Art School, Gagnon began as a Whistlerian. When he went to Paris to the Académie Julien where so many of the Canadian artists studied, he quickly achieved a reputation as an etcher and as a painter in the simplified style of Whistler, with clean broad patches of colour. Returning to Canada and working in the countryside near Quebec, he strengthened this style into something more three-dimensional and with an echo of Morrice, seeing, as the elder artist had done, the pictorial value of the villages under snow against the surrounding forests and hills, the solid forms of the little sleighs.

One other artist, Tom Thomson (1877-1917) stands before we come to the famous Group of Seven whose work has counted for so much in Canadian art. Thomson was largely a self-taught painter, something of a recluse in his passion for the magnificence of nature which he found in the wild regions of Algonquin Park, a government reserve with innumerable lakes and streams and fine forests. Here and elsewhere in the wilds Thomson loved to travel by canoe, fishing and camping at will, and here at last he settled as guide, painting the scenes he loved. His studies of trees, put in bold simplified masses, are brilliantly coloured and sensitive to the basic forms. His technique is a kind of pointillism often done with square touches which remind one a little of Seurat, but he came to these methods through his own experiments with his pigment and by his contacts with other Canadian painters. In 1917 his upturned canoe was found on one of the lakes, and Canada mourned one of her most interesting artists.

The story of Canadian art in the twentieth century is largely bound up with the Group of Seven, which, although it was not definitely formed until 1920, consisted of the seven men whose work had then been long operative in the art of their country: J. E. H. Macdonald, Lawrens Harris, Frank Carmichael, Arthur Lismer, Alexander Young Jackson, Franz H. Johnson, and Frederick Horsman Varley.

Macdonald must be regarded as the moving spirit, and 1907, when he returned to Toronto from England, the opening date. In Toronto, as the chief designer for a firm called Grip Limited, he met Tom Thomson, and later, Lismer, Carmichael, and Varley. These men began to take long

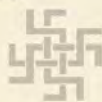
trips, largely by canoe, into the heart of Canada and to work out the brilliant technique which was to bring them fame. In these canoe trips for the purpose of sketching they were following the lead of a slightly older artist, John William Beatty (1868-1941), who had studied in Paris and worked in Europe but then went back to Canada and taught for many years at the Ontario College of Art. In his style of broad Impressionism Beatty was also a pioneer of the characteristic Canadian painting.

Macdonald soon decided to devote himself entirely to painting. By 1912 he was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy, and exhibited his typical early picture "Tracks and Traffic," bold in colour and design and essentially national. After that he created work after work in this vein. His painting was given a mixed reception by critics and public: one picture of 1916, "The Tangled Garden," especially calling forth a great deal of critical abuse. Nevertheless this style was winning recognition as a definitely Canadian expression.

The first World War inevitably cut across the art activity and the association of these men. It was responsible for one contribution to Canadian art in that Lord Beaverbrook launched a scheme for commissioning a number of foremost Canadian painters to make a record of the war, and Jackson, Morrice, Beatty, Lismer, Varley, and others were chosen to make this documentary collection. When these Government War Memorial paintings were subsequently exhibited in London, Varley especially won high praise.

With the end of the war in 1918 all these men returned to the work of depicting the wild beauty of Canada. Hitherto they had worked largely in the region of Algonquin Park, but now Macdonald discovered the more distant Algoma with its magnificent panorama of mountain, forest, and lake, and its even greater challenge. By 1920 they were all meeting regularly, and the idea of joint exhibition came into being, and that Group of Seven which yet could claim "we have no Group formula, and are conscious of widely divergent aims." Thirty pictures from that first "Exhibition by a Group of Seven Painters" were sent to the United States the next year, and at home in Canada their own second exhibition revealed how united they were by an almost common vision of that lovely land. The National Gallery of Canada began to buy their pictures in face of some controversy. But from thenceforward Macdonald, Jackson, Harris and Lismer especially, went almost everywhere in Canada and painted in the idiom they had evolved. When in 1924-25 this work came to the Canadian Pavilion at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley it was magnificently received, as it was in Paris in 1927.

A word about the other men who formed this group with Macdonald: Alexander Young Jackson was born in Montreal in 1883, studied at the





Académie Julien in Paris, was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy in 1919, but eventually resigned. He tremendously simplifies his forms, emphasises the natural rhythms for the sake of design, and paints in the vivid colours common to all these men.

Arthur Lismer was an Englishman, born in Sheffield in 1885, who went to Canada in 1911 after studying first in his native city and then in Antwerp. He has held many academic and educational posts in Canada, among them that of the Vice-Principal of the Ontario College of Art which has played so large a part in this movement.

Lawrens Harris was born in 1885 and after studying abroad also returned to Canada in 1911. His work, which began in the typical style of the Group, moved to a much greater simplification of the forms and such complete emphasis of the decorative rhythm of cloud, water, mountain, and ice that it verges on the abstract. He painted largely in the lakeside country of Lake Superior.

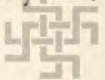
Frederick Horsman Varley, like Lismer, was a Sheffield man, born in 1881, and, like Lismer, he studied at the Académie Royale des Beaux Arts in Antwerp. He went to Canada in 1912. He is the one of these men who applied the bold style of the Group to portraiture and figure painting; and, as we have seen, his work for the Canadian War Memorial received the especial praise of the critics.

Franz H. Johnson was born in Toronto in 1888. He exhibited in the 1920 show of the Group of Seven, but then withdrew.

Franklin Carmichael, the youngest member of the Group, was born in 1890 in Orillia, Ontario. He, too, studied at the Ontario College of Art where eventually he became himself a teacher in 1932.

A few other men joined the Group at different times during its career: Alfred Joseph Casson (1898- ) a very typical painter in the style, but with the distinction of being also a fine water-colourist; Lemoine Fitzgerald (1890- ) who became Principal of the Winnipeg School of Art; Edwin Headley Holgate (1892- ) who, like Varley, was a strong figure painter as well as a landscape artist. Mention should also be made of Albert Henry Robinson (1881- ), who, though not a member of the Group, painted in the typical manner of these others.

All these artists are, as we would expect, represented in the National Gallery of Canada at Toronto, as well as in galleries abroad and in many private collections. The Group of Seven reached its zenith between 1924 and 1927 when, as we have seen, the exhibitions at Wembley and in Paris gave it European fame. In 1933 as a Group it came to an end when it merged with the larger Canadian Group, but by that time the style was established as typical of Canadian painting: the simplification of form, brilliant colour, curving strokes of pure pigment, emphatic rhythm;



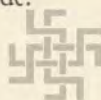
everything applied to the typical Canadian scene of mountain, forest, lake, or simple buildings, and using often the brilliant effects of snow to pictorial advantage.

In October to December of 1938 there was another great Exhibition of Canadian art in London, this time at the Tate Gallery, where "A Century of Canadian Painting" enabled us to review the whole story from Paul Kane to that date. Naturally there are now many painters pursuing highly individual techniques, some of them working in modernist subjective manner inspired by the later School of Paris. But it is too soon to decide which of them will live. Names spring to mind : Fritz Brandtner, a violent Expressionist, who turns his eyes to the docks and factories ; Alexander Bercovitch, the Russian figure painter, with his vivid palette ; the semi-abstract Marion Scott ; Carl Schafer, who continues to paint the rhythmic hills or the farm life in thin oils or in water-colour ; or Lilian Freeman, whose delicate line is something new in Canadian art. Unless it be Emily Carr, however, who has carried forward the bold traditions of the Group of Seven to the verges of Expressionism, it is impossible to see any painter of such outstanding Canadian individuality that we can safely consider as a new addition to that national contribution which the Group of Seven and its followers made to the art of the world.

### § 3

Art in South Africa has followed the line familiar to the great lands which called for physical effort and endurance rather than cultural development, so that only of comparatively recent years has there arisen a body of artists supported by the understanding and appreciation of a sufficient public. Now, in our own century, life has become wealthy, settled ; and a healthy artistic life has established its roots. These, again, as we would expect, draw their nourishment partly from the nature of South Africa itself, and partly from the art-life of Europe, in this case often of Holland since the Dutch influences share with the British.

Among the painters of the early nineteenth century we would name Samuel Daniel (1775-1811), the son of a Royal Academician and himself an exhibitor of the Royal Academy, who went to the Cape and in 1804 produced a series of fine colour-plate books called *African Scenery and Animals*. His water-colours of the life of the colonists of that time are of both documentary and artistic interest. The work of a Dutch artist, J. C. Poortemans (1786-1870) is less sophisticated as art, but equally of value as a record of the colonial life. He endeavoured after he came to the Cape in 1833 to establish the art of lithography there. Our own period would probably enjoy the very *naïveté* of the paintings and drawings he made.



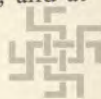


About the same time that Poortemans arrived at the Cape two other artists came, one on a visit, the other as a settler who became South Africa's leading artist. Sir Charles D'Oyley was a gifted amateur, an official in the Civil Service in India, who left some fascinating studies of Cape life. Thomas William Bowler (1813-69) was a fine water-colourist, who loved to portray the splendour of the East Indiamen riding at anchor or entering Table Bay. Shortly after came Thomas Baines (1820-75) who was an explorer as well as a daring artist. He depicted much that he saw with tremendous verve: landscape (he was the first to paint the grandeur of the Victoria Falls), hunting scenes, fighting and historical incidents, and the normal life of the colonies. His works in the Africana Museum at Johannesburg are an invaluable record of the period. Two other lesser names belong specifically to the nineteenth century: Wilhelm Langschmidt (1805-66) and F. Timpson I'ons (1802-87). The former was a German artist who settled at the Cape as a farmer and worked there as a portrait painter; the latter went out to the Eastern provinces and left us delightful impressions of the native tribal life and of the exotic landscape.

All these men, however, were colonial artists; and it was not until the beginning of this century that art in South Africa with roots in Europe moved into a new dimension. Frans David Oerder (1867-1944) may be considered a transition painter. He was a Dutchman who came to the Transvaal in 1890, worked for the Boers as a war artist during the South African War, left his adopted country when that war resulted in defeat, but eventually returned there towards the end of his life. His pictures of life in Pretoria are delightful records of the old Boer capital.

Most of the earlier men had gravitated to South Africa as colonists, and had, in fact, not been professional painters. Now the position was reversed. The new artists were born in South Africa and came to Europe for training, to Paris, London, Amsterdam. Sometimes they stayed and became absorbed in the body of European art; sometimes they returned to their native land, but, alas! too often only as an echo of the "isms" of the contemporary School of Paris.

Outstanding among them is the doyen of South African painting, Jacob Hendrik Pierneef (1886- ). He is, by far, the most important of the artists of the country: individual, decorative, an exciting colourist, perhaps a shade too eclectic and thereby sacrificing an impressive Pierneefism for echoes of other men's work. He can execute paintings on a large scale, as the murals at South Africa House in London testify, or he can create sensitive small easel pictures of lyric loveliness such as "The First Rain, Lichtenberg" which is in the Johannesburg Municipal Gallery. Pierneef was born in Pretoria and as a young man worked there under Oerder and the sculptor, Anton van Wouw. Thence he went to Holland, and at



Amsterdam and Hilversum contacted the newer movements, being especially influenced by Cubism. Back in South Africa, however, his individual sense of decoration caused him to become an interpreter of the South African scene in a stylised, but not a distorted, manner. The most appreciated of artists in the Dominion, Pierneef is still working in his native city.

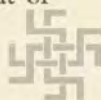
An even earlier artist of note is Hugo Naude (1869-1941), who was really the first South African artist to study abroad and to return as a professional painter. It was Olive Schreiner, that brilliant authoress of *The Story of an African Farm*, who took Naude up as a young man, sent him to London to study at the Slade, and then to Munich and to France. He returned to Worcester, his home town in the Cape Province, lived down prejudice against what was at that time a new vision out there, and became an honoured artist.

Pieter Wenning (1874-1921) is the next important figure. He was a poor man when he first came to South Africa in 1906, and for ten years he pursued his painting in the scarce leisure hours available to a man working hard for his living. For him there was no training in Europe, but he studied reproductions of the European Impressionists and he learned much from Japanese colour-prints. By about 1916 he had won a certain recognition and was able to rely entirely upon a growing patronage, so that in the few years left to him he became one of the most sought after and honoured of South African painters.

Two men of the 'nineties migrated to Europe and became part of the European art story: Neville Lewis (1895- ) and Enslin du Plessis (1894- ). Lewis often returned to Africa for the subject-matter of his pictures, and, indeed, may have returned there for good; Enslin, painter of still-life and of landscape, has worked chiefly in London and has only occasionally gone back to his native land.

Merlyn Evans (1910- ) is another artist who vacillates between South Africa and London. Actually he is a Welshman, having been born in Cardiff; but after his training he settled in the Dominion though more recently he has returned to London. Evans's most characteristic work is conceived in a vein of sinister horror of the modern world, and his themes are often of trials, executions and such phenomena of the contemporary political scene. These he presents in a highly organised, decorative Cubism, almost, but not quite, abstract.

For its size, wealth and importance, the art life of South Africa is still surprisingly unorganised. The last few years have, happily, shown a sense of this shortcoming, and given us the fine Municipal Art Gallery at Johannesburg, directed by one of the most scholarly of South African artists, Anton Hendricks; the establishment of The New Group in Cape Town, with something of the spirit of The London Group; and that of





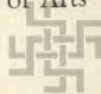
the Pretoria Art Centre whose director is Le Roux Smith le Roux, whose murals are a feature of South Africa House, London, and of the liner *Queen Elizabeth*.

The New Group includes most of the men and women with modern vision. One of the founders was Gregoire Boonzaier (1909- ), with Terence McCaw (1913- ), and the fine woman painter, Frieda Lock. Another important woman artist is Irma Stern, who has a reputation not only in the Dominion but in the foremost European capitals where she has had one-man shows. Wisely she has seen the aesthetic possibilities of the native types. Another artist who has exploited this material is Alexis Preller (1911- ) who was a student of Mark Gertler in London, and who has brought many African influences to bear on his work. This is true also of Walter Battiss (1906- ), who turned for his inspiration to the prehistoric cave paintings which have been discovered of recent years in Africa and have added so considerably to our knowledge of early art. Battiss is the author of a number of books on this subject, on which he is a scientific worker, and apart from his own original contribution to art—such as “Quagga Race, 1948” which was exhibited at the Olympiad Exhibition in London that year—he has made many careful copies of the cave paintings.

We are only beginning to understand the importance of the primitive art of Africa and its people, and most of this comes from the people of the coastal regions or of the interior farther north. One interesting portent in a recent exhibition of South African Art at the Tate Gallery, London, was the work of Gerard Sekoto (1913- ), a native painter, a self-taught Bantu artist, who was born at a mission station in the Transvaal, and is now an accepted professional painter. His studies of the people in the coloured quarters of the great towns are direct visions of a phase of life full of picturesque and formal qualities.

Along with these painters South Africa can also claim a number of distinguished sculptors, some of them working in the remarkable exotic woods of the region. The earliest was Anton van Wouw (1862-1945), who was working on a statue of President Kruger when the South African war broke out in 1899. He has made some fine bronzes of the Bantu people. Kruger's grandson, Stephanus Eloff (1885-1947), was himself a sculptor of standing with a reputation in Africa and in Paris where he did much of his work. Moses Kottler (1896- ) is the most eminent of the living sculptors. His portraits, and his studies of the Bantu people, are noble expressions carried out in wood, stone or bronze in a technique of simplified forms he has made his own.

Since the end of the war the Dominion has become art conscious to an extent never achieved before, and the South African Association of Arts



working as a co-ordinating official body will probably further still more the output and appreciation of good work already well begun.

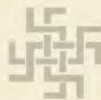
#### § 4

The pattern of the art activities of the Antipodes follows that of the other great Commonwealth nations. As in Canada and South Africa, the necessity of colonising, the sheer physical task of settlement and the building of the cities, militated against the establishment of a culture over many decades; the first manifestation of art was an echo of that of Europe, a kind of nostalgic transplanting of the styles prevalent earlier in the Old Country; this was followed by a realisation that the characteristic landscape, light and people offered the possibility of something new; and then, as communication with Europe became easier, artists were increasingly influenced by the newer revolutionary ideas of European art.

In the case of Australia this condition was emphasised by the fact that at first it was so largely a penal colony, and later was invaded by the gold rush of the 1850's: neither event likely to prove a very fertile field for culture. This early history has long since given place to a community with a very high standard of living and a rising culture, and of recent years some of the finest modern paintings and some important Old Masters have gone to Australia to the magnificent art galleries of her big cities, whilst her own artists have, in some cases, earned world-wide reputations especially in the field of black-and-white drawing. Names like Phil May, Will Dyson, Norman Lindsay and David Low are so well known that we tend to forget that they are Australians.

Australian art began in a strange direction, for the first was almost scientific, being the work of men whose draughtsmanship was devoted to recording natural history. Thus Sydney Parkinson was the recording naturalist of Captain Cook's vessel, *Endeavour*; William Westall in a like capacity on the *Investigator* made drawings of the Australian coast; and John Webber served on the *Resolution*. The first land artist of any note is Thomas Watling, actually one of the freed convicts who had once used his talent as a forger, been deported, and on the expiry of his sentence had turned to topographical water-colours. All the early work, practically, is in water-colour, for the immense distance of Australia from European sources meant that the actual material of oil-painting was not easily come by. Also, as we would imagine, it is topographical, and the names of John Eyre, M. Taylor, and J. W. Lewin arise. There was a kind of vogue—dictated maybe by the vastness and grandeur of the landscape—for panoramic views, especially of the rising township of Sydney.

Between 1809 and 1821, a stroke of good fortune came to the colony





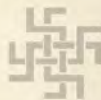
by the appointment of Lachlan Macquarie as Governor. Removed so far from any interference by the authorities in London he ruled his territory like a European prince, commissioning and setting a fashion for portraits, miniatures, and pictures in the eighteenth-century British tradition. From that time forward Australian art had its patrons and its exponents. Frederick Garling was one fascinating painter of marine subjects who boasted that he painted every ship which sailed into Sydney harbour. The next artist of importance was Conrad Martens, a pupil of Copley Fielding, who in 1832 sailed as the official artist in the *Beagle*, famous for its association with the young Charles Darwin. He settled in Sydney in 1835 and stayed there until he died in 1878, painting in oils as well as in water-colour in the manner of the prevailing English water-colour school. He made some fine studies of Sydney harbour.

One interesting untrained painter of the early period was James Wallis, who was attracted by the life of the natives and left us such records as that of a "Corroboree at Newcastle."

The gold rush of 1851-61 affected the fortunes of Australia in every way and not least of it art. It helped considerably to populate the country, it brought Australia into world prominence; it established the wealth of the lucky few; and, not least, it provided genre subjects and a form of popular art of illustration in lithography and engraving. Samuel Thomas Gill is the outstanding name. As a young man of twenty-one we hear of him at Adelaide in 1839. In common with so many out there he took part in the gold rush, for he was a "tough" fellow who drank, gambled, rode, quarrelled, and generally lived the rough life of the earlier settlers. But he saw the pictorial possibilities of the gold fields and equally their financial ones for an artist, and he turned his Rowlandson-like talent to the creation of series of engravings and lithographs of such subjects as "Gold Digging at Victoria," and so stood at the beginning of that tradition of illustrative black-and-white work in which Australians have done so well. Almost from the beginning of the Australian Press the newspapers, especially the excellent *Sydney Bulletin*, have taken seriously the service of culture both to art and literature and have published good drawings as well as short stories, poems, and expert criticism.

The settling down of the gold rush left the colony much richer in people and industry, and it is noteworthy that in 1860 at Melbourne was opened the first National Gallery and School of Art.

By the 'eighties, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide were established modern cities, and towards the end of that decade Impressionism, which proved so attractive to the Australian artists, gained its ascendancy. Tom Roberts in particular realised that the strong light, the subtle colouring, and the tree forms of the country demanded a treatment in the new theory

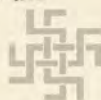


of outdoor painting which was stirring France. He had been preceded by an important Swiss-born artist, Abram Louis Buvelot (1814-88), who came to Melbourne in 1865 and gave us such fine work as the "Waterpool at Coleraine," which is in the National Gallery at Melbourne. He was followed by the man who stands at the peak of Australian art of the nineteenth century, Arthur Streeton. Streeton painted in the open air; he used a heavy, square-headed brush admirably suited to expressing the leaf forms of the prevailing gum trees; he pitched his work in very high tones, painting the foliage under the blinding sunlight of the country. Apart from his actual contribution of paintings he made his own enthusiasm contagious and trained other artists in the painters' camp which he established at Heidelberg. This "Heidelberg School" remains, even to-day, the main influence in Australian art. Along with Streeton should be mentioned Frank McCubbin, an Australian-born artist, painter of somewhat sentimental subject pictures like "Down on his Luck," a study of a settler for whom Australia had not proved a land of gold. There was a big Impressionist Exhibition in Melbourne in 1889 where this style of painting effectually won out.

By this time the artists were well aware of the pictorial possibilities of the Australian landscape and life. Emanuel Philip Fox, a teacher in Melbourne who had himself studied in Paris, exploited to the full the possibilities of broken colour even for the life-sized nudes which he painted, and which gained him (perhaps with some hyperbole) the title of the Australian Renoir. Hans Heyden, who worked as a landscapist in the arid central lands, exploiting the full pictorial and decorative possibilities of the scenery and the gum trees, was the apotheosis of the Australian approach. Max Meldrum, a Scottish artist who went out to Australia in 1889 and after travel and study abroad returned in 1913, establishing an art school and writing a great deal upon art, was another pronounced influence of the rising men.

Meantime Norman Lindsay had established his reputation with his almost Beardsleyesque black-and-white work for the *Bulletin* and in the books which he illustrated. His daughter, also a fine artist, who worked under the name of Ruby Lind, married Will Dyson, one of the most brilliant of cartoonists of the twentieth century, whose work in London for the *Daily Herald* has only been equalled by that other great Australian cartoonist, David Low.

The new century saw the establishment of the modernists. Roi de Mestre about 1919 became a leader of the movement in Sydney with Roland Wakelin; whilst in Melbourne, George Bell, although himself something of an Academic artist, fought for the new ideas and encouraged the new generation to work with a new vision. Arnold Shore brought the





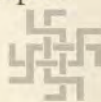
Post-Impressionism of Van Gogh, and William Frater that of Cézanne, while Kah Fizelle struck an individual note with a linear technique of sensitive beauty especially in studies of the nude. Along with these came inevitable echoes of all the later "isms" of the School of Paris, and violent controversy as to their right to be called art. Sir Lionel Lindsay, himself a good water-colourist, etcher, and woodcut artist, became one of the most slashing critics of modern art, and his diatribes against it in book-form and in newspaper articles are famous in art circles. Nevertheless a number of names of men practising in the modernist techniques achieved a place as Surrealists, Neo-Realists, and the rest: James Gleeson, Max Ebert, Peter Reeves-Smith, Eric Thake, and others. Not least was that of William Dobell, when the award of one of the Australian art prizes for his "Portrait of Joshua Smith," a Neo-Realist work, veered the whole controversy for a time round his work.

Recently some of the younger Australian artists have achieved a certain *réclame* for their exhibitions in London: Russell Drysdale, Brian Midlane, Mollie Paxton, and a promising young artist, Justin O'Brien, who works in a curious, almost Byzantine, style and is largely inspired by religious feeling. In less controversial manner the airy water-colours of J. S. Loxton have created interest in London, both at the Royal Academy and in a one-man show.

Art in Australia, therefore, has established itself firmly since its difficult beginnings in the early years of last century; and her fine galleries (some with magnificent bequest funds) and the propaganda work of the Australian Contemporary Art Society, founded by George Bell in 1938, go far to ensure an interesting future.

In some ways art in New Zealand has had advantages: the settlement there of the British in any quantity came later than in Australia, and under the gracious climate and lovely natural surroundings there was almost from the beginning a possibility of establishing a cultured life. Naturally it imitated the life left behind in Britain as far as it could, but the abundance of timber made the fashion for the architecture, and architecture inevitably affects the other visual arts. There was also the wonderful indigenous art of the Maoris, one of the finest and best preserved of the primitive arts of the world. If the later arrivals brought to the cities in the second half of the nineteenth century a much poorer conception of architecture, painting and sculpture, this has been largely corrected by a revival of good taste.

New Zealand, even more remote from Europe than Australia, suffers in that her artists are less known in the old world. Best of them probably is Stewart Maclellan, who has recently been appointed Director of the National Art Gallery and is himself a fine water-colourist and lithographer.

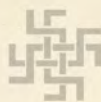




*Australian News and Information Bureau, London.*

### MARGARET OLLEY," BY WILLIAM DOBELL

Dobell is one of the controversial modern artists of Australia. His portrait of Joshua Smith, awarded the Archibald Prize in 1943, created great discussion. In 1948 he won this prize again with this highly stylised portrait. The manner owes something to Renoir, but William Dobell is too individual a painter to label.





He trained in London at the Royal College of Art. Russell Clark, another versatile New Zealand artist, who is now art master at Canterbury College ; Cedric Savage, who paints in a very direct style the beautiful Takaka region ; Vida Steinart, and a number of other lively artists reveal that if New Zealand came fairly late into this field she is now intensely aware of its possibilities.

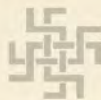


## ART IN AMERICA

## § I

THE story of painting in America is one of curious frustration. Material forces have from the beginning worked against the establishment of the pronounced national art which we might expect from this virile people. Indeed, their very virility has worked against it, for it has continually directed energy into other channels ; and, moreover, the culture of Europe has always acted as a lodestar to the most promising men. Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley, and Gilbert Stuart in the eighteenth century all came to England and became virtually British artists ; so did Whistler and Sargent in the nineteenth ; while Mary Cassatt went to France and became one of the established French Impressionists. In our own day we have lured Jacob Epstein so thoroughly from his native New York that we forget he is not British-born.

The need of colonising the vast areas of the country, the rise of the world's greatest industrial life, and the swift accumulation of enormous riches into the hands of men not intrinsically cultured even though they became the most spectacular collectors of pictures and *objets d'art* : all these things also have worked against the creation of the native school. The mere fact that the great millionaire industrialists bought the art treasures of Europe had, in some ways, a bad effect upon the growth of an indigent art. Nevertheless there have been the men who stayed at home, who saw in the American scene and the American way of life subjects worthy and inspiration compelling. They may have accepted the European tradition of manner of painting, echoing eighteenth-century portraiture, the Barbizon school of landscape painters, the Impressionists, and the wilder spirits of the modern School of Paris, but they have applied these mannerisms to the personalities, the landscapes, and the way of life of their own country. Washington Allston, George Inness, Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins, Albert Pinkham Ryder, John la Farge and others are names to conjure with, as the exhibition of American painting at the Tate Gallery in 1946 proved. Modernist art has to-day some notable exponents in the United States, and certainly has the encouragement of innumerable galleries and widespread patronage, especially by the Museum of Modern Art in New



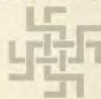


York which is certainly the greatest collection of modernist painting in the world.

## § 2

In the beginning America suffered somewhat from the Puritan inhibitions of her first settlers, for the Puritan tradition has always been inimical to all arts other than music. Soon, however, the colonies began to echo as far as they could the cultural life of eighteenth-century England and France, and the wealthy merchants and administrators began to collect paintings, especially portraits, in the prevailing European mode, particularly, of course, that of England. The first name which has real importance is that of John Smibert (1688-1751), a Scottish artist who went to the New World and carried there the British tradition. His group portrait of "Bishop Berkeley and His Entourage," painted in 1729, and now at Yale University, is a fine example of group portraiture. The first native-born painter, however, was Robert Feke (c. 1705-50), who became the portraitist of the foremost members of colonial society. The best known of his works is also a group portrait, "Isaac Royall and His Family," at Harvard Law School. With the growth of settled conditions and the establishment of the fine colonial houses, American painting might have established itself firmly on the English model yet with an American note, as the architecture had already done; but it met its first check in the War of Independence. Copley, anticipating the Revolution, left America in 1774 after he had contributed nobly to the Colonial art. West left in 1760, and at Rome embarked on that triumphant career which never wavered until he died as President of the Royal Academy in 1820, having succumbed to the lure of Europe. Gilbert Stuart left America just at the start of the War of Independence, entered West's by that time flourishing studio in London, became a dandy of the town and then, in 1792, returned to America declaring that he wished to paint Washington's portrait. Elegant, aristocratic, he was one of the fine portrait painters of that period of fine portraiture, and the picture which he eventually did make of the great Washington is one of his best works.

All these men belong largely to the story of European art. Benjamin West (1738-1820) especially was an influence, his studio becoming the centre for all Americans visiting London, and a training ground for American artists. He cultivated the great neo-classical story-painting, but added to it a note of romance. When he painted his famous "Death of General Wolfe," now in the National Gallery of Canada at Ottawa, he broke new ground by putting the characters in correct costume instead of the customary classical one. His vast "Death of Bayard," owned by His Majesty the King, anticipated the sheer romanticism of Walter Scott, and it comes as



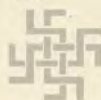
a surprise that it was painted in 1771. He was by common consent the only man to succeed Sir Joshua Reynolds as the President of the Royal Academy, a position which he occupied until his death in 1820.

John Singleton Copley (1737–1820) was greatest as a portraitist, but when he came to London he worked in the vogue which West had largely created of the large historical picture. His genius lay in incorporating good and authentic portraits into these histories. His “Death of the Earl of Chatham” (Tate Gallery), for instance, contains fifty-five portraits. Successful as he was with such enormous canvases, or in the royal portrait groups which he painted, many will prefer him in the earlier pieces painted before he left America, such as the glorious “Boy with a Squirrel” or the portrait, “Mrs. Thomas Boylston,” at Harvard University.

Meantime in America itself art suffered from that paradoxical success of the other phases of American life. There were portraits of the heroes of the new Republic. Two of these, of Lafayette, introduce to us two of the noteworthy painters, Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860), one of a family of artists largely influenced by Dutch art, and S. F. B. Morse (1791–1872), who is remembered best as the inventor of the Morse Code. Morse was a good artist, broad in his treatment and getting the essential character of his sitters. The City of New York commissioned a series of full-length portraits of the military and other leaders of the Republic, and in 1817 commissioned the murals for the Rotunda of the Capitol. As so often happens with grandiose schemes of art patronage very little of intrinsic worth resulted. John Trumbull (1756–1843) alone succeeded as a “historiographer,” his “Battle of Bunker’s Hill,” now at Yale University, being a fine battle picture. But America had set her face towards the enormous exploitation of her rich possessions of natural wealth, and art was not her *métier*. The rise of the mercantile classes in the North; the continuous movement into the great regions of the West: these gave no time for the cultivation of art.

### § 3

Despite the magnificence of the American landscape practically nothing had been done in this way. A few fascinating anonymous “primitive” paintings have come to us from the early nineteenth century, perhaps done by gifted amateur artists. “The Runaway Horse,” a great black horse set against a beautifully simplified background, is one of the best of these; and a curious “Meditation by the Sea,” where a tiny figure in a bowler hat stands beside a turbulent sea, might have been painted by a modern Surrealist. Around this time, however, there arose a number of artists whom we call the Hudson River School who did turn to the





Catskills and the White Mountains and the definitely American scenery for their subjects, investing it with something of the moral sublimity we would associate with the Lake School of English poets. Thomas Doughty (1793-1856); Thomas Cole (1801-1848), who painted the mountains in the purity of their snow with Wordsworthian sublimity, are the outstanding early landscape men.

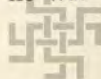
Washington Allston (1779-1843), the promisingly beautiful youth who charmed all who met him, who spent his life partly in Europe and partly in his native land, never quite fulfilling his early great possibilities, was the painter of subject pictures and of romantic ideal landscape. These were followed by George Inness (1825-94), a painter of the American scene in the manner of the French painters of Barbizon. He, too, was largely concerned with the moral teaching of the sublimity of Nature, and expressed this by vast views of the river valleys.

In the later part of the nineteenth century we have that cleavage again between the artists who were allured by European culture, and those who remained and gave American art its finest contribution. Of the former were Whistler, Sargent, and Mary Cassatt, with all of whom we have dealt in the preceding pages. Over against these were Winslow Homer (1856-1910), Thomas Eakins (1844-1916), and Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917).

Homer and Eakins are America's best artists. Homer's subjects were of Nature at her most inimical to man. He himself left New York and settled to a hermit's life on the bleak coast of Maine where he painted pictures of the sea in its fury, or of snowy landscape such as his magnificent "Winter"—a study of a fox and great hovering birds on a snow-covered coast—which is in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. His pictures of man at grips with the storm-swept sea are his most typical work, though now and again he does a dainty water-colour of this seashore he loved in its summer gentleness.

Eakins, with something akin to an Impressionist technique, turned to the active man, especially the sportsman, for his subjects. His studies of rowing men are his most typical. He was a friend of Walt Whitman, whom he painted, and who declared that he "never knew of but one artist, and that's Tom Eakins, who could resist the temptation to see what they thought ought to be, rather than what is." He has been called "the American Courbet," but this may be misleading for it applies to the realism of his subjects, but by no means to his somewhat lyrical style of painting, influenced as it became by Impressionism.

If Homer and Eakins may be classed as Realists, the third of the trio of foremost nineteenth-century American painters stands as a fine imaginative artist. This is Albert Pinkham Ryder. In actual technical power he was

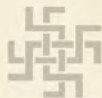




*Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*

**"MAX SCHMITT IN A SINGLE SCULL," BY THOMAS EAKINS**

Eakins, whom Walt Whitman hailed as one of America's greatest artists, was at his happiest in depicting men of action, and not least among them the rowing men. This subject gave him opportunity to put in landscapes in a brilliantly luminous technique which owes something to the French Impressionists.







*Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.*

"LONG BRANCH, NEW JERSEY," BY WINSLOW HOMER

A charming early work by one of the foremost American painters, recalling the *Plage* pictures of such French artists as Boudin. Later Homer thought of the task of American painting as that of showing the struggle between man and Nature, and settled on the wild Maine coast to paint the sea in storm and the hardy fisherfolk of the region.



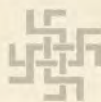
a lesser man ; in content a greater. He is a symbolist sometimes in a mood which reminds us of the eerie genius of Odilon Redon ; always there is in his pictures a sense of brooding and solitude. We watch "The Flying Dutchman" barely distinguishable from the wild seas over which everlastingly it sails ; or we stand with scarce discernible figures before the vast doorway of "The Temple of the Mind." If we think of the mind of Coleridge we have an analogy with Ryder. Elemental forces, wildness, loneliness, moonlight in wild valleys, everything mysterious is in his work. An interesting painter who belongs spiritually to the Surrealists long before they were operating or had established their theories.

One other nineteenth-century painter of eminence should be mentioned, John la Farge (1835-1910), an eclectic painter, French in racial origin and echoing all through his highly studious work the influences of European art. He took painting as seriously as Whistler or Sargent, wrote ably about his own and other men's work, executed a vast body of work much of it on a most ambitious scale, turning his attention to the designing of stained glass towards the end and achieving fine effects ; but there is a journeyman's air about its very ability which puts it behind the work of a man such as Ryder who could not approach him in technical prowess. One of the influences upon him was that other American artist, William Morris Hunt (1824-79), an impetuous painter who seldom carried his work far enough to achieve lasting greatness, but who was at his best when he painted the nude in a luminous stippled manner which conveyed the sensuous beauty of the flesh.

So we pass to the moderns and almost away from purely American painting, for they are all too often products of or echoes of that School of Paris which is not a school at all. America has taken kindly to modernity. It finds ready admission to the galleries, a ready market, attention in the Press. It is part of America's abounding youthfulness, and a little of her self-assertion against the traditions of the Old World. Nothing is too wildly modern to shock this all-embracing taste.

It has to be remembered that the American collectors bought the French Impressionists before there was any big European interest in them, and since commercial values operate a great deal in this matter in the States there is a tendency to gamble on the anarchic in the belief, or at least hope, that it will win out in the same way as did American support of the great Frenchmen.

Charles Burchfield (1893- ), Charles Demuth (1893-1935), and Lionel Feininger (1871- ), stand among the forerunners ; Demuth with such work as "My Egypt" and Feininger with his studies of architecture in the purely Cubist manner paying tribute to that fashion of painting. Feininger worked for many years in Germany, where he obtained a considerable

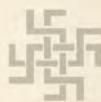




fame, but he returned to the United States in middle age. Max Weber was another ultra-modern man who was connected with the German Expressionist movement.

The first concerted movement towards a modern technique came much earlier when under Robert Henri (1865-1929), an enthusiastic painter of purely American life in a manner derived from Impressionism, established the group "The Eight," itself a successor of a Paris-inspired group "The Ten." The Eight were out for Realism in subject-matter and for directness in manner. They were scornfully called "The Ash-Can School" for their proclivity for finding subjects in the slum quarters and in low life of the great American cities. One of the best of them was George Luke (1867-1933) who searchingly depicted the children. John Sloan (1871- ) succeeded as well as any in conveying the pity for the underdog which underlay their work.

Since their time the fighting leadership has been taken by Alfred Stieglitz (1864- ), a man who, characteristically for America, graduated into the arts through his own art of photography which he used as brilliant formal and social comment. He it was who established a pioneer gallery on Fifth Avenue, began a revue "Camera Notes" which crusaded for the new forms in art, and introduced to the American public almost all the new men and the most daring European artists. Later at the New York Armory and at "An American Place" this work continued. Now there are altogether too many contemporary American galleries and artists working in the modern manner to attempt to list them; and time will tell which of them have the genius capable of outlasting contemporary fashion. In the tragic economic slump of the late 'twenties and early 'thirties an attempt was made by the government to do something for the impoverished artists by means of a great Federal Art Project, but like that early scheme at the establishment of the Republic it did little aesthetically despite its grand ideas for public murals and paintings. Art, even in well-organised America, bloweth whither it listeth, and does not take kindly to State cossetting.



## BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

THE enormous number of books upon art and artists already existing and continually being added to makes any recommendation seem invidious ; but the following list of established authorities will be helpful in pursuing the subject in greater detail. Some which are out of print can nevertheless be consulted at libraries or borrowed from them. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* should also be consulted, and its own bibliographies of each artist or aspect noted. There are also the great dictionaries of artists, chief of which is *Thieme and Becker's Lexicon* ; but this vast 36-volume work is in German, and *Bryan's Dictionary of Artists* will serve most purposes.

### GENERAL HISTORY :

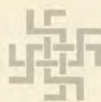
- History of Art*, by J. Piljoan (3 vols.).
- History of Art*, by E. Fauré (5 vols., Lane).
- The Story of Art*, by E. H. Gombrich (Phaedon).
- A History of Art*, by H. B. Cotterill (2 vols., Harrap).
- The Arts of Mankind*, by Hendrik van Loon (Harrap).
- A History of Art*, by G. Caroti (2 vols., Duckworth).
- A Miniature History of European Art*, by R. H. Wilenski (Oxford).
- European Painting and Sculpture*, by Eric Newton (Pelican).
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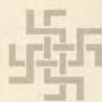
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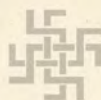
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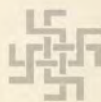
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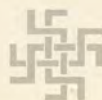
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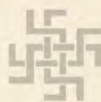


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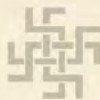


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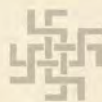




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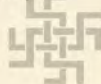


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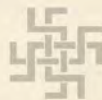




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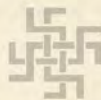




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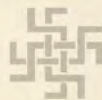
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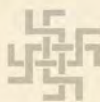


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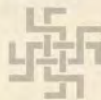




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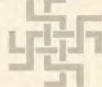


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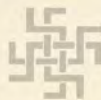
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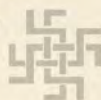


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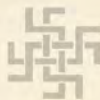


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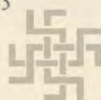


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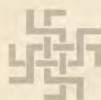
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